

ARE YOU READY?



How to get ready for a power outage

Losing electricity in your home temporarily – a few minutes or hours – can often be a pain in the neck. However, a power outage can be life threatening if it lasts longer, especially during cold weather.

Here are a few tips to follow in case you lose power in your home for a long time.



Preparing for a power outage

Store emergency supplies in your home, including a first aid kit, canned food (and a manual opener), bottled water, flashlight, battery-operated radio and any essential prescription drugs. Make sure you know how to shut off gas, water and electric supplies at the source in your house. Keep a fire extinguisher in the house.

Tell the police department and fire department ahead of time if you have a person living in your home who needs special assistance. Locate emergency shelters in your community in case you need assistance during a power outage.



During a power outage

Carbon monoxide can kill you even though you can't see it and you can't smell it. So the best way to protect yourself is to prevent carbon monoxide from building up in the first place. What's the best way to do this during a power outage? Don't use the following inside of your home without ventilation: barbecue or camp grills, gasoline engines, generators, lanterns and gas ranges. Using these indoors could lead to a poisonous buildup of air in the house. If you must use any of these appliances, be sure to open lots of windows first. Also, don't burn any charcoal and wood in your home with the windows shut.

- If power is out for a long time, don't eat any food in your refrigerator that is warmer than 40 degrees (°F) as measured by a food thermometer.
- Drink plenty of water if the weather is hot. But first call your local water company to make sure the water from your faucet is safe to drink while you are waiting for the power to go back on.
- If it's cold outside, wear lots of clothing to keep warm.
- Don't touch any power lines either on the roof of your home or on the ground.

Even if there's no power in your home, there may still be live wires. If someone in your home gets an electrical shock, don't touch them or the source of the shock! Use cardboard, wood or plastic to move the live wire away from the person. Once you have moved the electrical source, check the person's pulse, call 911 and start CPR if necessary. If a person looks weak, lay her or him down and elevate the person's legs.

After the power comes back on

Check with your neighbors and see if they have power turned back on. If not, offer to assist them in any way you can. Make sure that your water is clean before drinking or bathing in it. Also check the temperature of the food in your refrigerator before eating it: When in doubt, throw it out.



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