

Be prepared

How to Prepare for an Outage

Here are some tips on how to prepare for and stay safe during an electrical power outage:

Portable generators:

You can purchase a portable electrical generator that will temporarily supply power to your home or office during an outage. These have many beneficial uses—but make sure beforehand they are installed correctly. They can be deadly if misused. Get your generator inspected by a licensed electrician.

Appliances:

Unplug appliances during an outage to protect them from a power surge when the electricity comes back on. Keep one lamp plugged in with the switch turned on so you'll know when power has been restored.

Computers:

It's important that your computers, printers and scanners always be connected to a surge protector to protect them when the power goes off suddenly. Consider installing an uninterruptible power supply, which is essentially a power backup system that lets you save the work that's open on your computer's screen and then shut off your computer system safely should the power fail. And always keep backup copies of your older work on CDs or some other long-term computer storage technology.

Food preparation:

Commercially canned foods can be eaten straight from cans, but don't try this with home-canned foods. Charcoal or gas grills are handy for cooking when there's no electricity, but never use them indoors. If you have a portable electrical generator you can plug small cooking appliances such as electric skillets into it.

Water:

You should store enough fresh water to last each member of your family five days; sometimes an outage will disable the pumps that operate your water system. Store one gallon of water per day, per person, for drinking, washing, cooking and sanitation. Commercially bottled water is good, but so is tap water if it's stored in non-corrosive, non-breakable and tightly covered containers. Stored water typically stays fresh for six months to one year. If your water smells or turns cloudy, pour it out.

Refrigeration:

Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible. If you do, your refrigerated food will stay suitably cold for four hours or more, and frozen foods may stay frozen for up to two days. You can also purchase ice and dry ice commercially if you need it.

Telephones:

Cordless phones and answering machines won't work during a power outage. Always have at least one phone that isn't dependant on electricity.

Cash:

Keep extra cash on hand. ATMs won't function during an outage.

Emergency kit:

You need an emergency kit for your family that includes any prescription drugs you or your loved ones require. In addition your kit should have blankets, flashlights, batteries, an AM/FM battery-powered radio, a wind up or battery alarm clock and light sticks.



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