

# BE PREPARED FOR A POWER OUTAGE

Power outages are more likely to occur during severe weather events, such as strong thunderstorms, hurricanes and winter storms, or other natural disasters, such as wildfires.

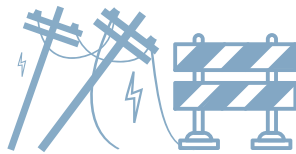


FEMA

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A power outage is when the electrical power is lost unexpectedly.

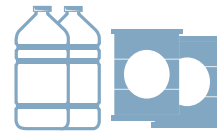
Power outages . . .



may disrupt communications, water utilities, and transportation for a long time.



may cause businesses, stores, gas stations, ATMs, banks, schools and other services to close.



may cause food spoilage and water contamination.



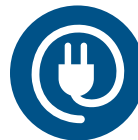
may cause injuries, disease or death, or prevent use of medical devices.

## PROTECT YOURSELF FROM A POWER OUTAGE

Keep freezers and refrigerators closed.



Unplug appliances and electronics to avoid damage from electrical surges.



Use generators outdoors and at least 20 feet away from building openings.



Make a plan for refrigerating medicines and powering medical devices.



Stay fire safe. Do not use a gas stove to heat your home.



If safe, go to an alternate location for heat or cooling.



Keep mobile phones and electronic equipment charged before a power outage.



# HOW TO STAY SAFE FROM A POWER OUTAGE

## Prepare NOW

**Create a communications plan and keep a paper copy.**

**Install smoke and carbon monoxide alarms with battery backup (if hardwired) on every level of your home and near sleeping areas.** Learn the signs of carbon monoxide poisoning, which include flu-like symptoms.

**Talk to your doctor to make a plan** for how you will use your medical devices that need electricity, store your medications and stay safe during a power outage.

**Gather supplies to last for several days.** Check your supplies regularly and before predicted extreme weather events. If you aren't able to build a separate emergency supply kit, make sure you know where items that you already have are located.

**Keep mobile phones and other electronic equipment charged before a power outage.** Plan for alternative power sources that you can use to charge devices.

**Determine whether your phone will work in a power outage and how long your battery backup (if applicable) will last.** Remember that landline phones will not work if the lines are damaged.

**Make sure your vehicle's gas tank has plenty of fuel before predicted extreme weather events** in case there's a power outage.

**Install and use your generator safely.** Store fuel safely. Plan to prioritize the things you will need to plug in. You may not be able to power all appliances at one time.

**Prepare to keep the refrigerator and freezer cold with ice.** Keep a thermometer in the refrigerator and freezer so that you can make sure food stays at a safe temperature. Be prepared to throw away food that's no longer at a safe temperature.

## Survive DURING

**Avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.** Use generators, camp stoves or charcoal grills outdoors, at least 20 feet away from any building openings like windows, doors or garages. Never use a gas stovetop, oven, grill or dryer to heat your home.

**Stay fire safe.** Use flashlights, lanterns and other battery-powered lights. Don't use gas stoves or candles to heat your home. Always use fireplaces, portable heaters and wood-burning stoves safely.

**Don't leave a vehicle running inside a garage,** even if the garage door is left open. If you use your vehicle as a source of power or warmth, make sure to run it in a well-ventilated place outside.

**Keep freezers and refrigerators closed.** A refrigerator will keep food cold for **about 4 hours**. A full freezer will stay a safe temperature for **about 48 hours**. Do not store food in the outside or in the snow during cold weather.

**Unplug appliances, equipment and electronics** to avoid damage from electrical surges. Use surge protection devices.

**Pay attention to water advisories.** Boil water or use bottled water from your emergency supply kit, if needed.

## Be Safe AFTER

**When in doubt, throw it out!** Throw away any refrigerated food that has been exposed to temperatures 40 degrees Fahrenheit or higher for more than 4 hours. Throw away refrigerated food that has an unusual odor, color or texture.

**Replace refrigerated medications if the power is out for a day or more, unless the drug's label says otherwise.** Call your doctor or pharmacist if you depend on refrigerated medications that have been at room temperature. Only use the medicine until you have a new supply.

### Be Prepared. Multiple Disasters May Happen at the Same Time.

**Know how to stay cool in extreme heat, even when the power is out.** Find places with air conditioning that you can go to. Find shade, wet your skin with water, avoid high-energy activities and wear lightweight, light-colored clothing.

**Make a plan to stay warm if a power outage happens in the winter.** Evaluate your safety before leaving your home. Consider spending the coldest parts of the day in a location with heat. Check on family members and neighbors if it is safe to do so.

### Take an Active Role in Your Safety

Go to [Ready.gov/power-outages](https://www.ready.gov/power-outages). Download the **FEMA app** to get more information about preparing for a **power outage**.

