



Consumer Alert

SURVIVING ELECTRICAL POWER OUTAGES

What You Can Do If You Lose Your Electric Service

Prepare For A Power Outage Before It Happens

1. Set aside and designate for emergency use:
 - Flashlights
 - Battery-powered radio
 - Extra batteries
 - Candles
 - Blankets
 - First-aid kit
 - Nonperishable food
 - Battery-operated lantern
 - Drinking water – (1 gallon per person per day)
 - Some emergency cash
2. Keep a list of emergency numbers near the telephone – including the number to the local electric company. Unless telephone lines are down, landline telephone service should remain available during an electrical power outage. Cellular service may not work if power to the cell tower system is disrupted.
3. Protect electrical items like TVs, VCRs, microwave ovens, or a home computer with voltage surge suppressors. If these items are not protected, unplug them before a storm begins to prevent damage.



When Power is Lost

- Check the fuse or breaker box to see if the outage is due to a blown fuse or tripped circuit breaker. Check with neighbors to see if their power is out.

- Call the local electric company to report the outage. Also, advise the company if there is emergency medical equipment in the home.
- Unplug most lights and appliances to prevent electrical overload when power is restored.
- Keep the refrigerator door closed as much as possible. Move milk, cheese, meats, etc. into the freezer compartment of the refrigerator. If the freezer is only partially full, group packages together so they form an “igloo” to keep each other cold. Cover the refrigerator and freezer with blankets to provide additional insulation. Consider placing dry ice in the freezer to help keep food frozen.
- Avoid downed power lines and immediately report the situation to the electric company or local law enforcement agency.

Additional Steps When Power is Lost and Outside Temperature is Cold

1. If you have city-provided water, open faucets so there is a constant drip so pipes won't freeze.
2. Dress warmly – wear a hat since body heat escapes through the top of the head.
3. A fireplace may be used to provide light as well as heat. Make sure the damper is open for proper ventilation.
4. Store perishable food outside in a cold and shaded area or in an unheated garage.

When Power is Restored

Sometimes when electricity is restored, power levels can vary considerably. Wait a few minutes before turning on lights. Plug in appliances one at a time.

