



Power Outage



Regardless of whether a power outage in your home happens because of a grid failure or severe weather like a hurricane, there are things you can do to stay safe and improve day-to-day life without electricity.

Power Outage Safety

- Keep extra cash on hand since an extended power outage may prevent you from withdrawing money from ATMs or banks.
- Keep a disaster supply kit handy with water, nonperishable foods, medicine, printed copies of essential documents, baby supplies, pet food, and more. See the full list [here](#).
- Maintain a supply of flashlights, batteries, hand-crank cell phone chargers, battery, and solar-powered radios.
- Identify an alternative power supply for any family members who are dependent on electric medical equipment.
- Keep one or more coolers with an ample ice supply to keep your food cold in case a power outage is prolonged. Avoid storing perishable foods above 40 degrees Fahrenheit for more than two hours.
- Open your refrigerator or freezer only when necessary and seek guidance from your local officials to determine the average amount of time your food will remain safe in your area without power.
- Never use candles as they pose a dangerous fire hazard.
- Turn off any electrical equipment that was in use before the power outage but leave one light on to alert you when power resumes.
- Check on elderly neighbors, friends, or relatives who may need assistance if the weather is severe during the outage.
- During a power outage, resist the temptation to call 9-1-1 for information—use radios, online news sources, or social media channels for updates.
- Keep your car fuel tank at least half-full as gas stations rely on electricity to power their pumps.
- Be careful when driving through intersections as traffic lights may not be working.
- Once power is restored, wait a few minutes before turning on major appliances to avoid problems caused by a sharp increase in demand.



Power Outage



Generator Use and Safety Reminders

If you are using a portable power generator, thoroughly read and follow all manufacturers' instructions, and keep these safety tips in mind:

- Understand the primary hazards to avoid when using a generator—carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning from the toxic engine exhaust, electric shock/electrocution, and fire.
- Use gas-powered generators only in well-ventilated outdoor areas. Always operate the generator outdoors and away from open windows and doors -- NEVER operate it inside, including the basement, enclosed patio, or garage.
- Keep the generator dry to avoid electrocution.
- Plug appliances directly into the generator, or use a heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cord that is rated (in watts or amps) at least equal to the sum of the connected appliance loads. Check that the entire cord is free of cuts or tears and that the plug has all three prongs, especially a grounding pin.
- Only connect individual appliances to portable generators and never plug a generator into wall outlets. Plugging generators into the home's electrical system can feed electricity back into the power lines. Known as "backfeeding," this practice puts utility workers, your neighbors, and your family at risk of electrocution.
- Be sure to turn the generator off and let it cool down before refueling. Gasoline spilled on hot engine parts could ignite.
- Store fuel for the generator in an approved safety can. Use the type of fuel recommended in the instructions or on the generator label.
- Ask your local fire department if local laws restrict the amount of fuel you may store at your location. Store the fuel outside of living areas in a locked shed or other protected area. To guard against accidental fire, do not store it near a fuel-burning appliance, such as a natural gas water heater in a garage.
- Before the start of hurricane season, be sure to start your generator to ensure that it is working properly.

Remember to include power outage tips in your [family disaster plan](#) and update your plan each year.