

Be Red Cross Ready

Power Outage Checklist

Sudden power outages can be frustrating and troublesome, especially when they last a long time. If a power outage is 2 hours or less, you need not be concerned about losing your perishable foods. For prolonged power outages, though, there are steps you can take to minimize food loss and to keep all members of your household as comfortable as possible.

Energy Conservation Recommendations

- Turn off lights and computers when not in use. Turn the computer off completely each evening.
- Wash clothes in cold water if possible, wash only full loads and clean the dryer's lint trap after each use.
- When using a dishwasher, wash full loads and use the "light" cycle. If possible, use the "rinse only" cycle and turn off the "high temperature" rinse option. When the regular wash cycle is done, just open the dishwasher door to allow the dishes to air dry.
- Replace incandescent light bulbs with energy-efficient compact fluorescent lights.

How do I prepare for a power outage?



What should I do during a power outage?



What should I do when the power comes back on?



To help preserve your food - keep the following supplies in your home:

- One or more coolers - Inexpensive Styrofoam coolers work well.
- Ice - Surrounding your food with ice in a cooler or in the refrigerator will keep food colder for a longer period of time during a prolonged power outage.
- A digital quick-response thermometer - With these thermometers you can quickly check the internal temperatures of food to ensure they are cold enough to use safely.

Put together an emergency preparedness kit with these supplies, in case of a prolonged or widespread power outage.

- Water - 2 week supply; one gallon per person per day
- Food - 2 week supply of non-perishable, easy-to-prepare food
- Manual can opener
- Flashlight (*NOTE: Do not use candles during a power outage due to the extreme risk of fire.*)
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio.
- Extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Medications (7 day's supply) and medical items
- Sanitation and personal hygiene items
- Baby supplies
- Pet supplies
- Two-way radio or cell phone with extra batteries and/or chargers
- Copies of all important documents
- Family and emergency contact information
- Extra cash
- If someone in your home is dependent on electric-powered, life-sustaining equipment, make a plan for backup power and include this in your evacuation plan.
- Keep a non-cordless telephone in your home. It is likely to work even when the power is out.
- Keep your car's gas tank full.

Keep food as safe as possible.

- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible. First use perishable food from the refrigerator. An unopened refrigerator will keep foods cold for about four hours.
- Then use food from the freezer. A full freezer will keep the temperature for about 48 hours (24 hours if it is half full) if the door remains closed.
- Use your nonperishable foods and staples after using food from the refrigerator and freezer.
- If it looks like the power outage will continue beyond a day, prepare a cooler with ice for your freezer items.
- Keep food in a dry, cool spot and keep it covered at all times.

Electrical Equipment

- Turn off and unplug all unnecessary electrical equipment, including sensitive electronics.
- Turn off or disconnect any appliances (like stoves/ovens), equipment (like air conditioners) or electronics you were using when the power went out. When power comes back on, it may come back with momentary 'surges' or 'spikes' that can damage equipment and appliances.
- Leave one light turned on so you'll know when the power comes back on.
- Eliminate unnecessary travel, especially by car. Traffic lights will be out and roads will be congested.

- Do not touch any electrical power lines and keep your family away from them. Report downed power lines to the appropriate officials in your area.

Throw out unsafe food.

- Throw away any food that has been exposed to temperatures 40° F (4° C) for two hours or more or that has an unusual odor, color or texture. When in doubt, throw it out!
- Never taste food or rely on appearance or odor to determine its safety. Some foods may look and smell fine, but if they have been at room temperature too long, bacteria that cause food-borne illness can start growing quickly. Some types of bacteria produce toxins that are not destroyed by cooking.
- If food in the freezer is below 40° F and still has ice crystals on it, you can refreeze it.
- If you are not sure a particular food is cold enough, take its temperature with the food thermometer. Throw out any perishable foods (such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and leftovers) that have been exposed to temperatures over 40° F (4° C) for two hours or more, and any food that has an unusual odor, color, or texture, or feels warm to the touch.

Caution: Carbon Monoxide Kills. Use Generators Safely

- Never use a generator indoors, in a garage, basement, crawlspace, or any partially enclosed areas even with ventilation. Locate unit away from doors, windows and vents that could allow carbon monoxide to come indoors.
- If you are considering getting a generator, get advice from a professional, such as an electrician.
 - Make sure that the generator you purchase is rated for the power that you think you will need.
 - Generators can be permanently installed or portable.
 - The primary hazards to avoid when using a generator are carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning, electric shock and fire.

Let Your Family Know You're Safe

If your community or region experiences a disaster, register on the American Red Cross Safe and Well Web site available at RedCross.org to let your family and friends know about your welfare. If you don't have internet access, call **1-800-RED-CROSS** to register yourself and your family.

