



**Strengthening Homes  
and Safeguarding Families**

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## Power Outage

### A Power Outage Overview

#### What is a "Rolling Blackout"

A rolling blackout occurs when a power company turns off electricity to selected areas to save power. The areas are selected using sophisticated computer programs and models. The blackouts are typically for one hour, then the power is restored and another area is turned off. Hospitals, airport control towers, police stations, and fire departments are often exempt from these rolling blackouts. These blackouts usually occur during peak energy usage times, usually between 4 and 7 p.m. on weekdays, but they can happen at any time of day. Blackouts may affect the same area more than once a day, and may exceed an hour's duration.

#### How will I know if I will be affected by a Rolling Blackout?

Listen to local television, radio and check the web site of your local power company. Usually, rolling blackouts occur when power usage increases, especially during hot weather when many people are using air conditioning to keep cool. Power companies try to give a warning when they will turn off power to an area, but they cannot always do that.

## FLASH Card: Corte del suministro eléctrico (Power Outage)

### Corte del suministro eléctrico

Ya sea que el corte del suministro eléctrico en su hogar se produzca por una falla en la red o por condiciones climáticas rigurosas, puede tomar las medidas que se indican a continuación para prepararse y estar listo para responder adecuadamente. Incluya a los cortes del suministro eléctrico en el plan familiar para casos de desastre, identificando medios alternativos de transporte y rutas alternativas para llegar a su hogar, a la escuela o al trabajo.

Tenga dinero en efectivo extra a mano, ya que un corte prolongado del suministro eléctrico puede impedirle retirar dinero de cajeros automáticos o bancos.

Mantenga a mano una provisión de alimentos no perecederos, medicamentos, elementos para el cuidado del bebé y alimento para mascotas, según corresponda. También mantenga a mano aproximadamente cuatro litros (un galón) de agua por persona por día.

Evite abrir el refrigerador y el congelador. Lo más probable es que los alimentos estén seguros en tanto el corte del suministro eléctrico no dure más de 4-6 horas.

Tenga una o más neveras portátiles para mantener fríos los alimentos en el caso de que el corte del suministro eléctrico se

prolongue. Los alimentos perecederos no deben almacenarse durante más de dos horas a más de 4,5 grados centígrados (40 grados Fahrenheit).

Tenga una fuente de alimentación eléctrica de emergencia si hay alguien en el hogar que depende de equipo médico alimentado eléctricamente.

Mantenga a mano una provisión de linternas, pilas y una radio a pilas. No use velas porque representan un riesgo de incendio.

Sólo conecte los electrodomésticos a generadores portátiles y nunca enchufe un generador a un toma de corriente de pared.

Use generadores a gas sólo en lugares bien ventilados.

Si conduce un vehículo, tenga cuidado en las intersecciones ya que es posible que los semáforos no funcionen, lo que crea una situación peligrosa.

Apague cualquier aparato eléctrico que estuviese en uso antes del corte del suministro.

Apague todas las luces excepto una (para poder darse cuenta cuando se restablezca el suministro).

Compruebe que sus vecinos, amigos o familiares ancianos estén bien, ya que es posible que necesiten ayuda si las condiciones climáticas son rigurosas durante el corte del suministro eléctrico.

Durante el corte del suministro, resista la tentación de llamar al 9-1-1 para obtener información; para eso está la radio a pilas. No enchufe generadores de emergencia en tomas de corriente ni los acople directamente al sistema eléctrico de la casa, ya que pueden retroalimentar de electricidad a las líneas de transporte de energía, lo que lo pondrá en peligro usted y a quienes puedan estar trabajando en las líneas.

Mantenga el tanque de combustible de su vehículo lleno por lo menos hasta la mitad (las bombas de las gasolineras funcionan a electricidad).

Cuando el suministro eléctrico se restablezca, espere unos minutos antes de encender los electrodomésticos más grandes, para reducir la posibilidad de problemas causados por un brusco aumento de la demanda.

¡Proteja su hogar en un FLASH con la Federal Alliance for Safe Homes (Alianza Federal para Hogares Seguros)!

<http://www.flash.org/> Teléfono gratuito: 1-877-221-SAFE

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## FLASH Card: Power Outage

### Power Outage

Whether a power outage in your home is caused by grid failure or severe weather, you can take the following steps to prepare and respond. Include power outages in your family disaster plan, identifying alternate means of transportation and routes to home, school or work.

- Keep extra cash on hand since an extended power outage may

prevent you from withdrawing money from automatic teller machines or banks.

- Keep a supply of non-perishable foods, medicine, baby supplies and pet food as appropriate on hand. Also 1 gallon of water per person per day.
- Avoid opening the fridge or freezer. Food should be safe as long as the outage lasts no more than 4-6 hours.
- Have one or more coolers for cold food storage, in case power outage is prolonged. Perishable foods should not be stored for more than two hours above 40 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Have an emergency power supply for anyone dependent on medical equipment requiring electricity.
- Keep a supply of flashlights, batteries, and a battery-powered radio on hand. Do not use candles as they pose a fire hazard.
- Connect only individual appliances to portable generators and never plug a generator into wall outlets.
- Use gas-powered generators only in well-ventilated areas.
- When driving, be careful at intersections traffic lights may be out, creating a dangerous situation.
- Turn off any electrical equipment that was in use prior to the power.
- Turn off all lights but one (to alert you when power resumes).
- Check on elderly neighbors, friends or relatives who may need assistance if weather is severe during the outage.

During a power outage, resist the temptation to call 9-1-1 for information that's what your battery-powered radio is for. Don't plug emergency generators into electric outlets or hook them directly to your home's electrical system as they can feed electricity back into the power lines, putting you and line workers in danger. Keep your car fuel tank at least half-full (gas stations rely on electricity to power their pumps). When power is restored, wait a few minutes before turning on major appliances to help eliminate further problems caused by a sharp increase in demand.

## Power Outage -- Prepare For

### Before a Blackout Happens

Assemble essential supplies, including:

Flashlight

Batteries

Portable radio

At least one gallon of water

A small supply of food.

Due to the extreme risk of fire, do not use candles during a power outage.

If you have space in your refrigerator or freezer, consider filling plastic containers with water, leaving about an inch of space inside each one. (Remember, water expands as it freezes, so it is important to leave room in the container for the expanded water). Place the containers in the refrigerator and freezer. This chilled or frozen water will help keep food cold if the power goes out, by displacing air that can warm up quickly with water or ice that keeps cold for several hours without additional refrigeration.

If you use medication that requires refrigeration, most can be kept in a closed refrigerator for several hours without a problem.

If unsure, check with your physician or pharmacist.

If you use a computer, keep files and operating systems backed up regularly. Consider buying extra batteries and a power

converter if you use a laptop computer. A power converter allows most laptops (12 volts or less) to be operated from the cigarette lighter of a vehicle. Also, turn off all computers, monitors, printers, copiers, scanners, and other devices when they're not being used. That way, if the power goes out, this equipment will have already been safely shut down. Get a high quality surge protector for all of your computer equipment. If you use the computer a lot, such as for a home business, consider purchasing and installing an uninterruptable power supply (UPS). Consult with your local computer equipment dealer about available equipment and costs.

If you have an electric garage door opener, find out where the manual release lever is located and learn how to operate it. Sometimes garage doors can be heavy, so get help to lift it. If you regularly use the garage as the primary means of entering your home upon return from work, be sure to keep a key to your house with you, in case the garage door will not open.

If you have a telephone instrument or system at home or at work that requires electricity to work (such as a cordless phone or answering machine), plan for alternate communication, including having a standard telephone handset, cellular telephone, radio, or pager. Remember, too, that some voice mail systems and remote dial-up servers for computer networks may not operate when the power is out where these systems are located. So even if you have power, your access to remote technology may be interrupted if the power that serves those areas is disrupted. Check with remote service providers to see if they have backup power systems, and how long those systems will operate.

Keep your car fuel tank at least half full because gas stations rely on electricity to power their pumps.

Follow energy conservation measures to keep the use of electricity as low as possible, which can help power companies avoid imposing rolling blackouts.

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## Disaster Kit -- Assembling

### What To Plan For

You'll need to plan for two situations: Remaining in your home after a disaster or evacuating to a safer location.

Keep enough supplies at home for at least three days. Have a three-day supply of food and water on hand -- plan for one gallon of water per person per day and food that won't spoil. Don't forget a can opener (not an electric one) and emergency tools including a fire extinguisher, battery powered radio, flashlight, and plenty of batteries.

### Disaster Supply Checklist

Be sure to gather the following items to ensure your family's basic comfort and well-being in case of evacuation.

Cash -- Banks and ATMs may not be open or available for extended periods.

Water -- at least one gallon per person for three to seven days.

Food -- at least enough for three to seven days, including: Non-perishable packaged or canned food and juices, food for infants or the elderly, snack food, non-electric can opener, vitamins, paper plates, plastic utensils.

Radio -- battery powered and NOAA weather radio.

Blankets, pillows etc.

Clothing -- seasonal, rain gear/ sturdy shoes.

First Aid Kit -- medicines, prescription drugs.

Special items -- for babies and the elderly.

Toiletries -- hygiene items, moisture wipes.

Flashlight and batteries.

Keys.

Toys, books, games.

Store important documents in a waterproof container: insurance papers, medical records, bank account numbers, Social Security cards.

Tools.

Vehicle with full tank of gas.

Pet care items: Proper identification, immunization records, ample food and water, medicine, a carrier or cage, leash.

### **Keep Your Kit Fresh**

Remember to replace stored food and water every six months. Also keep a supply of fresh batteries on hand. Remember to keep your most important up-to-date family papers in a fire and water proof container. These should include Social Security cards, deeds or mortgages, insurance policies, birth and marriage certificates, stocks, bonds, wills and recent tax returns.

### **The Importance of Water**

Stocking an emergency water supply should be one of your top priorities. During an emergency drinking water should not be rationed, that's why it's critical to have enough water on hand for yourself and your family.

While individual needs will vary depending on age, physical condition, activity, diet, and climate, a normally active person needs at least two quarts of drinking water daily. Children, nursing mothers, and people who are ill need more water. Very hot temperatures can also double the amount of water needed.

Because you will also need water for sanitary purposes, and possibly for cooking, you should store at least one gallon of water per person per day.

When storing water, use thoroughly washed plastic, fiberglass, or enamel-lined containers. Don't use containers that can break, such as glass bottles. Never use a container that has held toxic substances. Plastic containers, like soda bottles, are best.

Seal your water containers tightly, label them and store them in a cool, dark place.

It is important to change stored water every six months.

# Disaster Safety for People with Disabilities

## Safety Tips for People with Disabilities

If you have a disability or special need, you may have to take additional steps to protect yourself in an emergency. If you have family, friends or neighbors with special needs, help them with these extra precautions.

People with disabilities often require assistance and additional lead time in order to prepare for a disaster. The following list, while not exhaustive, provides some practical tips for those with special needs.

Establish a personal support network. This network of friends, family, and neighbors can assist in disaster preparations and getting you to a safe place.

Post Emergency Instructions on the refrigerator to include medication dosages, necessary equipment, and emergency contacts.

Register with local emergency management and fire departments.

Identify multiple evacuation routes at home and at work. Ask your employer to include and test these plans.

Carry with you at all times emergency health information and emergency contacts. A medical alert tag or bracelet to identify your disability can prove helpful.

Have an alternate means of communication, like a dry erase board or writing tablet and markers.

When calling 911, tap the space bar to engage the TDD system.

If you are mobility impaired and live or work in a high-rise building, have an escape chair.

If you live in an apartment building, ask the management to mark accessible exits clearly.

Keep extra wheelchair batteries, oxygen, catheters, medication, food for guide or hearing-ear dogs, or other items you might need. Also keep a list of the type and serial numbers of medical devices you need.

Stock additional emergency supplies, such as batteries, blankets, cash, medications, non-perishable foods, water and a weather radio.

Install fire safety devices in the home, such as fire extinguishers and smoke alarms with a vibrating pad or flashing light.

Consider also installing an alarm with strobe light outside the home to alert neighbors. Test alarms and extinguishers regularly and replace smoke alarm batteries every six months.

Keep a flashlight, whistle, or bell handy to signal your whereabouts to others.

For more information on how to prepare children with special health care needs, visit [www.aap.org/advocacy/emergprep.htm](http://www.aap.org/advocacy/emergprep.htm).

For information on protecting your service animal in an emergency, visit [www.disabilitycentral.com](http://www.disabilitycentral.com).

## Energy Conservation

### Conserving Power

To conserve power to help avoid a blackout, the power industry recommends:

In heating season, set the furnace thermostat at 68 degrees or lower. In cooling season, set the thermostat at 78 degrees or higher. Consider installing a programmable thermostat that you can set to have the furnace or air conditioning run only when you are at home. Most power is used by heating and cooling, so adjusting the temperatures on your thermostat is the biggest energy conservation measure you can take.

Turn off lights and computers when not in use. This is especially true about computer monitors - avoid using a "screen saver" and just simply turn the monitor off when you won't be using the computer for a while. Turn the computer off completely each evening. It is no longer true that computer equipment is damaged from turning it off and on.

Close windows when the heating or cooling system is on.

Caulk windows and doors to keep air from leaking, and replace old windows with new, energy-efficient windows.

Clean or replace furnace and air-conditioner filters regularly.

When buying new appliances be sure to purchase energy-efficient models.

Wrap the water heater with an insulation jacket, available at most building supplies retailers.

If you have to wash clothes, 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.

Use one large light bulb rather than several smaller ones.

If you would like more information about rolling blackouts and how to deal with them, contact the power company that serves your area.

## People With Disabilities: Power Outage

### Safety in a Power Outage

If you use a battery-operated wheelchair, life-support system, or other power-dependent equipment, call your power company before rolling blackouts happen. Many utility companies keep a list and map of the locations of power-dependent customers in case of an emergency. Ask them what alternatives are available in your area. Contact the customer service department of your local utility company(ies) to learn if this service is available in your community.

If you use a motorized wheelchair or scooter, have an extra battery. A car battery also can be used with a wheelchair but will

not last as long as a wheelchair's deep-cycle battery. If available, store a lightweight manual wheelchair for backup.

If you are Blind or have a visual disability, store a talking or Braille clock or large-print timepiece with extra batteries.

If you are Deaf or have a hearing loss, consider getting a small portable battery-operated television set. Emergency broadcasts may give information in American Sign Language (ASL) or open captioning.

## Safety Tips During a Power Outage

### Family Safety During a Power Outage

Only use a flashlight for emergency lighting. Never use candles.

Turn off electrical equipment you were using when the power went out.

Turn off or disconnect any appliances, 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 such as computers and motors in appliances like the air conditioner, refrigerator, washer, or furnace.

Leave one light turned on so you'll know when your power returns.

Avoid opening the refrigerator and freezer.

Leave the doors of your refrigerator and freezer closed to keep your food as fresh as possible. If you must eat food that was refrigerated or frozen, check it carefully for signs of spoilage.

Use the phone for emergencies only. Listening to a portable radio can provide the latest information. Do not call 9-1-1 for information -- only call to report a life-threatening emergency.

Do not run a generator inside a home or garage.

If you use a generator, connect the equipment you want to power directly to the outlets on the generator. Do not connect a generator to a home's electrical system.

Eliminate unnecessary travel, especially by car. Traffic signals will stop working during an outage, creating traffic congestion.

Remember that equipment such as automated teller machines, (ATMs) and elevators may not work during a power outage.

If it is hot outside, take steps to remain cool. Move to the lowest level of your home, as cool air falls. Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing. Drink plenty of water, even if you do not feel thirsty. If the heat is intense and the power may be off for a long time, consider going to a movie theater, shopping mall, or, "cooling shelter" that may be opened in your community. Listen to local radio or television for more information. Get more tips on the preparing for a heat wave.

Remember to provide plenty of fresh, cool water for your pets.

If it is cold outside, put on layers of warm clothing. Never burn charcoal for heating or cooking indoors. Never use your oven as a source of heat. If the power may be out for a prolonged period, plan to go to another location (relative, friend, or public



facility) that has heat to keep warm.

Listen to local radio and television for updated information.

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## Using a Generator

### Safe Use of a Generator

If you are considering obtaining a generator, get advice from a licensed professional, such as an electrician.

Make sure the generator is listed with Underwriter's Laboratories or a similar organization. Some municipalities, Air Quality Districts, or states have "air quality permit" requirements. A licensed electrician will be able to give you more information on these matters.

Always plan to keep the generator outdoors -- never operate it inside, including the basement or garage. Do not hook up a generator directly to your home's wiring.

The safest thing to do is to connect the equipment you want to power directly to the outlets on the generator. Connecting a cord from the generator to a point on the permanent wiring system and backfeeding power to your home is an unsafe method to supply a building during a power outage.

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## Keeping Food Safe After a Power Outage

### Keeping Food Safe

It's important to be aware that food that has not been refrigerated can cause severe health problems.

Remember that:

Items in a full freezer will stay frozen for about two days with the door kept closed; in a half-full freezer, for about one day.

Refrigerated foods can keep for up to four hours.

Discard any perishable refrigerated foods that have been above 40 degrees F for more than two hours.

Discard any food with an unusual odor, color or texture. Remember: "When in doubt, throw it out."

For additional information about food safety during power outages, call the toll-free USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-800-535-4555.

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## Power Outage -- Safety Tips

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