

Thunderstorms: Power Outage - Safety Tips During

Material provided by Federal Alliance for Safe Homes <http://www.flash.org/>

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.

Family Safety

- 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 your car fuel tank at least half-full, gas stations rely on electricity to power their pumps.
- During a power outage, resist the temptation to call 9-1-1 for information --that's what your battery-powered radio is for.
- 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.
- Keep a supply of flashlights, batteries and a battery-powered radio on hand. Do not use candles as they pose a fire hazard.
- Keep a supply of non-perishable foods, medicine, baby supplies, and pet food as appropriate on hand. Also be sure to have at least one gallon of water per person per day on hand.
- If it is [cold](#) outside, put on layers of warm clothing. Never burn charcoal for heating or cooking indoors.
- If it is [hot](#) outside, take steps to remain cool. Move to the lowest level of your home as cool air falls and 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.
- Remember to provide plenty of fresh, cool water for your [pets](#).

Food

- 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.
- If you must eat food that was refrigerated or frozen, check it carefully for signs of spoilage.

Generators

- Do not run a [generator](#) inside a home or garage. Use gas-powered [generators](#) only in well-ventilated areas.
- Connect only individual appliances to portable [generators](#).
- 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.

When Power Returns

- 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.
- 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.