

Power Outages – What to Do When the Lights Go Out

Everyone experiences power interruptions from time to time. Unfortunately, many of these outages come at times of weather extremes or accompany a disaster. When the power is out we lose our primary source of artificial light and many lose our source of heat and water as well. When the power is out, safety becomes a major concern.

Emergency Management Officials offer the following suggestions:

- **Register life-sustaining equipment** in your home with your utility company -- you can be put on a priority list to establish electricity. Lifesaving equipment might include ventilators, home dialysis machines, neonatal monitors, etc.
- **Consider purchasing a small generator** if you use life-sustaining equipment requiring electricity.
- **Post the utility telephone numbers** to report repairs and outage information.
- **If you own an electric garage door opener**, learn how to open the door without power.
- **Prepare a power outage kit.** For short duration outages, consider having glow light sticks, flashlights, a battery-powered radio, extra batteries and a wind-up clock on hand.
- Make sure you have an **alternate heat source** and a supply of fuel.
- **Have a corded telephone available.** Cordless phones do not work when the power is out.
- **When installing generators** follow the manufacturer's instructions and have it inspected by the utility company and the local code enforcement department.
- **If your house is the only one without power**, check your fuse box or circuit breaker panel. Turn off large appliances before replacing fuses or resetting circuits.
- **If power is out in the neighborhood**, disconnect all electrical heaters and appliances to reduce the initial demand and protect motors from possible low voltage damage.
- **If you leave your home**, turn off or unplug heat-producing appliances.
- **Unplug computers and other voltage sensitive equipment** to protect them against possible surges when the power is restored.
- **Conserve water, especially if you are on a well.**
- **Keep doors, windows and draperies closed** to retain heat in your home.
- **Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed.** If the door remains closed, a fully loaded freezer can keep foods frozen for two days.
- **Be careful of fire hazards** caused by candles or other flammable light sources.
- **When using kerosene heaters**, gas lanterns or stoves inside the house, maintain ventilation to avoid a build-up of toxic fumes. Install a carbon monoxide detector in your home.
- **Connect lights and appliances directly to a generator**, not to an existing electrical system.

NOTE: Leave one light switch in the ON position to alert you when the service is restored.