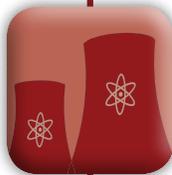




POWER OUTAGES



WHAT IS A POWER OUTAGE?

Power outages or blackouts are a loss of power to an area.

After power goes out, utility companies and government officials will first work to restore power to critical infrastructure like power plants and transmission lines, water treatment facilities, and telecommunications networks, and also to hospitals, critical care facilities, and emergency response agencies. It may take several days or even weeks to restore power to individual homeowners..



KNOW THE TERMS

Safety Disconnect: An electronic (automatic or manual) switch that disconnects one circuit from another circuit. These are used to isolate power generation or storage equipment from conditions such as voltage spikes or “surges”, thus avoiding potential damage to equipment.

Starting Surge: Power, often above an appliance’s rated wattage, required to bring any appliance with a motor up to operating speed.

Blackout: A complete interruption of power in a given service area.

Rolling Blackouts: When electric companies shut down power to an area for a certain amount of time in order to avoid a total blackout of the power system.

Brownout: A partial and temporary reduction in system voltage or total system capacity.

Electric Grid: The network that gets power from the power company to the consumer. It consists of power stations, transmission lines, and transformers.

Electric Conservation: Using less energy by turning off lights or the TV, walking, or biking instead of driving a car.



ACTIONS TO CONSIDER

BEFORE

Things you can do to protect yourself, your family and your property from the effects of a power outage:

- Build or restock your emergency preparedness kit.
- Make sure you have alternative charging methods for your phone or any device that requires power.
- Know where the manual release lever of your electric garage door opener is located and how to operate it.
- Purchase ice or freeze water-filled plastic containers to help keep food cold during a temporary outage.
- Keep your car’s gas tank full-gas stations rely on electricity to power their pumps.
- Learn about the emergency plans that have been established in your area so you can locate the closest cooling and warming shelters.
- If you rely on anything that is battery-operated or power dependent like a medical device, have a back-up plan.
- Consider adding surge protectors or safety disconnects to sensitive electronics to prevent damage caused by “surges”.

DURING

If a prolonged period of power outage were to occur, these are actions you can take to protect yourself, family, and property:

- DO NOT keep your car running in a garage, partially enclosed space, or close to a home to charge devices. This can lead to carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Only use flashlights for emergency lighting, candles can cause fires.
- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed; an unopened refrigerator will keep food cold for about 4 hours, and a full freezer will keep cold for about 48 hours.
- Take steps to remain cool if it is hot outside. Consider going to a movie theater, shopping mall or shelter that may be open in your community.
- Put on layers of warm clothing if it is cold outside.
- Never burn charcoal for heating or cooking indoors or use your oven as a source of heat.
- Turn off or disconnect appliances and other equipment in case of a power “surge” that can damage computers and other devices.
- If you are considering purchasing a generator for your home, consult an electrician or engineer before purchasing and installing.
- Only use generators away from your home and NEVER run a generator inside a home or garage, or connect it to your home’s electrical system.

AFTER

Guidelines for the period following a power outage:

- Throw away any food that has been exposed to temperatures 40°F (4°C) for 2 hours or more, or that has an unusual odor, color or texture.
- If food in the freezer is colder than 40°F and has ice crystals on it, you can refreeze it.
- Contact your doctor if you’re concerned about medications having spoiled.
- Restock your emergency kit with fresh batteries, canned foods and other supplies.



DID YOU KNOW...

In 2009, a total of 2,470 power outages were reported in the US that kept over 30% of the nation’s households in blackout conditions for a total of 7,699 hours; the equivalent of 321 days!



Contact your Installation’s Office of Emergency Management for further information.

