

POWER OUTAGES

BEFORE A POWER OUTAGE

To prepare for a power outage you should do the following:

- ✓ Build an emergency kit and make a family communications plan.
- ✓ Follow energy conservation measures to keep use of electricity as low as possible, which can help power companies avoid imposing rolling power outages.
- ✓ Fill plastic containers with water and place them in the refrigerator and freezer if there's room. Leave an inch of space inside, because water expands as it freezes. This chilled/frozen water will help keep food cold during a power outage by displacing air that can warm up quickly. This water or ice can keep food cold for several hours without additional refrigeration.
- ✓ Be aware most medication that requires refrigeration can be kept in a closed refrigerator for several hours without a problem.
- ✓ Keep your car tank at least half full, gas stations rely on electricity to power their pumps.

DURING A POWER OUTAGE

- ✓ Use only flashlights for emergency lighting. NEVER use candles during a power outage or power outage due to extreme risk of fire.
- ✓ Keep refrigerator and freezer doors 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.
- ✓ Turn off or disconnect appliances, equipment (like air conditioners) or electronics in use when the power went out. Power may return with momentary "surges" or "spikes" that can damage computers and equipment motors.
- ✓ Do not run a generator inside a home or garage.
- ✓ Do not connect a generator to a home's electrical system.
- ✓ Listen to local radio and to a battery or generator powered TV for updated information.
- ✓ Leave on one light so that you'll know when your power returns.
- ✓ Use phones or cell phones for emergencies only.
- ✓ Do not call 9-1-1 for information—call only to report a life-threatening emergency.
- ✓ Take steps to remain cool if it is hot outside. In intense heat when the power may be off for a long time, consider going to a movie theater, shopping mall or "cooling shelter" that may be open in your community. If you remain at home, move to the lowest level of your home, since cool air falls. Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing. Drink plenty of water, even if you do not feel thirsty.
- ✓ Never burn charcoal for heating or cooking indoors. Never use your oven as a source of heat.
- ✓ Provide plenty of fresh, cool water for your pets.
- ✓ Eliminate unnecessary travel, especially by car. Traffic signals will stop working during an outage, creating traffic congestion.

AFTER A POWER OUTAGE

- ✓ Throw out unsafe food: 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. When in doubt, throw it out!
- ✓ If food in the freezer is colder than 40° F and has ice crystals on it, you can refreeze it.