



# Power Outage

**E**very winter brings the possibility of a major storm and power outages. There is no way to stop the weather, but there are ways to prepare that will make you more comfortable and safe when the lights go out.

## Before a power outage occurs:

- Life-support equipment should be registered with your local electric utility so your home can be put on the priority list for re-establishing service. If you have critical life support equipment, you should consider purchasing or renting a small generator.
- Installations of a generator should be done by a qualified electrician. Improper connection methods not only endanger the building occupants, but pose a serious hazard to utility workers as well.
- Keep the telephone number for reporting power outages to your utility handy.
- Make sure you have a traditional phone as a backup to your cordless telephone--which will not operate when the power is out.
- Learn how to open your electric garage door manually--before you have no choice.
- Prepare a 72-Hour Kit. Be sure that it includes items you will need or want immediately available, such as flashlights, extra batteries, battery-powered radio and a wind-up clock.

## In the event of a power failure:

- If your house is the only one without power, check your fuse box or circuit breaker panel. Turn off 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 the motors from possible low voltage damage.
- When the power goes out, shut off or unplug all heating appliances, such as your stove or iron. This will help prevent fires when the power is turned back on.
- Unplug sensitive electronic equipment, such as personal computers, microwave ovens or your VCR to protect them from possible power surges when power is restored.
- Leave one light switch on, so you know when power is restored.



## Emergency Management

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## In the event of a power failure (continued):

- Save water. Electric pumps for wells or pumping stations may also be out of power. You should be able to get safe drinking water from your faucets, because some water will be stored in your hot water tank.
- Keep your refrigerator and freezer doors closed. An unopened fully-loaded freezer can keep foods frozen for two days.
- Never use charcoal or gas barbeques, camping heating equipment or home generators indoors. They can give off carbon monoxide, which can cause serious health problems, even death.
- Keep candles a minimum of one foot in all directions from flammable items such as curtains or bedding. Use sturdy candleholders and never leave candles burning unattended.
- If you use a kerosene heater, gas lantern or stove inside the house, maintain ventilation to avoid a build up of toxic fumes.
- If it is cold, keep doors, windows and curtains closed and close off empty rooms to retain heat.
- Report the outage to your utility. Provide details such as whether other homes in your neighborhood are without power, when it went out and whether you saw anything that might have caused the outage.
- Call the power company again if your home is still without power after houses around you have had their power restored.

## After the power returns:

- If the main electric switch was turned off, check to ensure appliances, electric heaters, TVs, microwave ovens and computers are unplugged to prevent damage from a power surge when the power is restored.
- Switch on the main electric switch.
- Turn the thermostats up first, and then reconnect the fridge and stove a few minutes later.
- Make sure the hot water heater is filled before turning on the power to it.
- Rinse out dishwasher and washing machine if necessary.
- Check food supplies for spoilage.

*A message from your friends at:*

**Umatilla County Emergency Management**