

How can I survive a power outage?

Never use open combustion units (gas or charcoal barbecues, hibachis) inside the home.

- If traffic lights go out, treat all intersections as four-way stops. It's required by law for safety.
- Minimize driving to conserve fuel. You cannot refill the tank during a power outage.
- Stay away from downed power lines and sagging trees with broken limbs.
- Don't get wet if you have no way to get dry.

What's the first thing I should I do when the lights go out?

- Turn off lights and electrical appliances except for the refrigerator and freezer. Even if it is dark, turn light switches, buttons on lamps or appliances to the "off" position.
- After you turn the lights off, turn one lamp on so you will know when power is restored. Wait at least 15 minutes after power is restored before turning on other appliances.

What should I do if a power line falls down?

- Don't touch or get near any fallen lines.
- Stay away from objects or puddles in contact with downed power lines.
- Notify the utility company (Seattle City Light Power Outage Hotline 206-684-7400).

Will my gas heater work?

No. Thermostats, furnace fans and blowers all run on electricity.

How can I stay warm?

- Wear extra layers of clothes and use several layers of blankets.
- Do not get wet if there is no way to get dry.
- Drink and eat enough to preserve health.
- Close off all rooms that are not in use and do not need to be heated.
- To keep rooms warm, close curtains, shades or drapes. Cover doors and windows.

How can I safely use alternate heat sources?

- Do not burn anything inside your home without adequate ventilation to the outdoors.
- Have enough fuel available for alternate heat sources, such as wood for a wood stove.
- Never use gas ovens, gas ranges, barbecues, and most portable or propane heaters for indoor heating. These units use oxygen and create carbon monoxide that can cause suffocation.
- Before using an alternate heat source, read the manufacturer's instructions.
- Have firefighting materials: dry powder, fire extinguisher, heavy tarp or blanket, water.

How should a portable generator be used?

Use generators only as independent power sources. Keep them outside and run a cord inside. Don't connect generators to main service panels. This could injure or kill utility workers trying to restore power.

How do I keep food safe to eat?

- Use foods that spoil rapidly first.
- Keep cold food cold. Use dry ice or an ice chest. In winter, store food outside.
- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed to conserve cold air.
- If food is cold to touch, it is probably safe to keep, use or refreeze.
- Discard meat, seafood, dairy products and cooked food that are not cold to touch.
- Fruits, vegetables and food in undamaged cans are safe.
- Food that needs no refrigeration: jelly, butter, margarine, ketchup, mustard, pickles, relish.
- If in doubt, throw it out.
- For information on food safety, call your health department or cooperative extension service.

How do you treat contaminated water?

If the water from your tap is clear:

- Boil it for three minutes. This kills disease-causing bacteria and parasites, OR
- Add 1/8 teaspoon household bleach per gallon of water. Let it sit for 1/2 hour.

If water is cloudy:

- Pour it through a coffee filter and boil it for three minutes. If you can't boil it, filter it and add 1/4 teaspoon of bleach per gallon. Let it sit for one hour.

How do I operate my electric garage door opener?

Operate the door by hand. Read the owner's manual or call the manufacturer.

Are there special considerations for people with chronic health problems?

Yes. Talk to your doctor about an emergency supply of prescription medicine. Keep a 30 supply in your emergency kit. Be aware of the expiration date on the medication and rotate a fresh supply into the kit on a regular basis. If you are on life support, register with your utility company, and have a backup power supply on hand.

What do I need to prepare for the next power outage?

- Flashlights, extra batteries and matches. Keep them where you can find them in the dark.
- Battery-powered radio.
- Battery-powered or wind-up clock.
- Canned or dried non-perishable foods, and a manual can opener.
- A safe alternate source of heat and extra fuel (wood, kerosene).
- Extra blankets and warm clothes.
- One gallon of bottled drinking water per person per day.
- A gallon of liquid chlorine bleach for sanitizing utensils and dishes.
- A regular (not cordless) phone.

Tips courtesy Washington State Department of Health