

## Do 1 Thing...Power



The mission of Do 1 Thing is to move individuals, families, organizations, businesses, and communities to prepare for all hazards and become disaster resilient.

**THE GOAL: Be able to safely meet your basic needs during an electrical outage.**

### Do One Thing

- Have flashlights ready in an easily accessible place
- Check batteries in flashlights and radios
- Create a power outage checklist and review it with your family
- Learn how to safely use portable generators

### Emergency Lighting

When the lights go out, the safest way to provide emergency lighting is with flashlights or battery-powered lanterns. If you must use candles during a power outage, make sure that you use them safely. Keep flashlights with fresh batteries in several places throughout your home and check them for proper operation regularly. Always keep a supply of extra fresh batteries. Consider purchasing a rechargeable flashlight that will always stay charged until ready for use.

### Power Outage Plans

Create a plan for dealing with long-term power outages. Things to consider:

#### Before Power Goes Out:

- Fill empty space in freezer with containers of water. Frozen water will displace air and keep food cold longer. Remember to leave space in containers for ice to expand.
- Have at least one corded phone in your home. Many cordless phones will not work in a power outage.
- If you have an automatic garage door opener, learn how to use the manual release and open your garage door manually.
- Try to keep your car's gas tank at least half full. Many gas stations will not be in operation during a power outage.
- Make sure you have a car or lighter plug cord for your cell phone.
- If you have a disability or use special healthcare equipment like oxygen generators or dialysis equipment, notify your power company.

#### Candle Safety

Flashlights are the best choice during a power outage, but if you must use candles, make sure you follow these safety guidelines:

- Never leave candles burning unattended.
- Keep burning candles out of the reach of children and pets.
- Keep matches and lighters out of the reach of children.
- Only use stable, non-flammable candle holders (don't make your own candle holders out of saucers or other household objects).
- Don't place a burning candle in a draft.
- Don't place burning candles near flammable materials like curtains, clothing or books.

## After Power Goes Out:

- Unplug major appliances and electronics. When the power comes back on, there may be power spikes that can damage large appliances or delicate electronics.
- Do not open refrigerators or freezers any more than necessary. An unopened refrigerator will keep food cold for approximately 4 hours, an unopened freezer will keep food frozen for approximately 24 hours.
- Use battery powered radio or television to stay informed.

## Power Outage Safety

- Discard food if temperature exceeds 40 degrees for more than 2 hours
- Use candles only when absolutely necessary. Always follow safety guidelines.
- Do not use Kitchen Range or Oven for heat during a power outage.
- Never call 911 to report power outages or to inquire about power restoration. Only call 911 for life-threatening emergencies
- Stay away from downed power lines and anything they come into contact with such as fences or buildings.
- Never drive over downed power lines, they may be energized.
- Never use charcoal or gas grills inside a structure. You may be overcome by carbon monoxide.

## Using Generators Safely

Using a properly connected generator of adequate size during a power outage will allow you much more comfort and safety. A generator will allow you to keep your food supply cold in your refrigerator/freezer instead of using emergency food supplies. If you use a well, it will allow you to keep your current water supply instead of your emergency water supply. In cold weather, it will allow you to use your furnace to safely keep warm instead of using less safe methods like fireplaces or space heaters. In short, a generator may reduce or almost eliminate the impact a power outage has on your life.

The best way to use a portable generator is to connect it to your home using a transfer switch installed by a licensed electrician. This will prevent the power you provide to your home from traveling through wiring that is not designed to handle the load. It will also prevent the power your generator creates from traveling back into the power lines which can injure or kill people working on power lines, or can unexpectedly re-energize downed power lines near your home. You may also connect equipment directly to the outlets on the generator, but be sure that any extension cords are of the proper length and gauge to handle the power requirements. Always run generators outside. Never use a generator inside a house, in a basement or garage. Never use a cord from a generator to backfeed a circuit in your home. This can cause fires or can cause people working on power lines to be injured or killed.

### Generator Tips

- Before purchasing a generator, consult an electrician about the size and type to ensure you have adequate power to run the household equipment you require.
- Use fuel stabilizer in generator fuel tank when generator is stored for more than 30 days
- Always allow generator to cool down before refueling

## For more information

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/poweroutage/>

<http://www.do1thing.us>