



# Be Prepared When the Lights Go Out

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Being prepared when the lights go out is essential to maintaining a safe and calm environment. Here are a few tips to help you if that happens:

- Prepare for the worst. Have enough food, water, flashlights, batteries and other necessities for 72 hours.
- Unplug all appliances and electronics, even if they are plugged into a surge protector, during an outage to prevent damage from a power surge. Leave one light on so you will know when the power is back on.
- Stay home if possible. If you drive, remember to stop at every four-way intersection because traffic signals will be out.
- Have a plan to reunite with family. Know your family's schedules and cell phone numbers.
- Have a telephone that does not require electricity.
- Have battery operated candles and flashlights – try to avoid using flame candles and matches to prevent a fire. Run generators outside only.
- Fireplace should be ready to use. Don't burn wood that has paint, stain or is chemically treated.
- Have extra blankets on hand. Do not use barbecues or hibachis inside the home, you can get carbon monoxide poisoning from the fumes.
- Use only fresh gasoline for a generator because old gasoline will not fire up well.
- Familiarize yourself with your main electrical panel. You may have to trip a reset switch in an outlet or circuit breaker.
- Settings on microwaves, ovens, clocks, DVD players, programmable thermostats and some alarm systems may have to be reset. Make sure to have fresh batteries in your alarm backup system.
- Always unplug old, small appliances when leaving home.
- Buy appliance thermometers to check temperatures. Refrigerators should be at 40 degrees or colder, and freezers should be at zero degrees or colder. Avoid opening the refrigerator and freezer. Generally, food-borne bacteria can multiply in perishable foods that are left at temps above 40 degrees.
- Be sure to inform the electric company in advance if loss of electricity will create an immediate threat to life or personal safety.

