PRINT AND KEEP / EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Power outage: what to do in order

A safety-first checklist to keep with your flashlight. Follow your utility and local emergency alerts.

- [ ] **Check immediate danger**

  Downed lines: stay well back, keep others away, call 911 and the utility. Leave if you smell gas, see sparks or smoke, or hear arcing. Do not touch the panel.

- [ ] **Protect people first**

  Check on anyone relying on powered medical equipment. Use their agreed backup-power or evacuation plan; call emergency services if needed.

- [ ] **Confirm and report**

  If safe, check whether nearby homes have power. Report a wider outage to your utility; use official alerts. Never approach utility equipment.

- [ ] **Light and communication**

  Use battery lights, not candles. Keep phones charged with a battery bank or vehicle only when used safely outdoors; save battery power.

- [ ] **Food and water**

  Keep fridge and freezer doors closed. Refrigerated food is generally safe for 4 hours unopened; a full freezer about 48 hours, half-full about 24. Use a thermometer; discard perishables above 40°F for 2+ hours. Never taste-test.

- [ ] **Prevent carbon-monoxide poisoning**

  Run generators and grills outdoors, at least 20 feet from openings, with exhaust away from the home. Never use them in a garage. Never backfeed house wiring.

- [ ] **Protect the home safely**

  Unplug sensitive devices if safe. If heat is off in freezing weather, follow your water-shutoff plan or contact a qualified pro. Never use an oven to heat your home.

- [ ] **When power returns**

  Wait for stable service, reconnect devices gradually, and check appliances and food temperatures. Call a qualified electrician for damaged wiring, repeated trips, heat, or burning smells.

MY UTILITY: _____ **EMERGENCY CONTACT:** _____

BACKUP LOCATION / MEDICAL PLAN: _____

USDA food safety • CDC generator guidance • local utility instructions take priority