

Safety tips for power outages and downed power lines

Power outage

Before

- Have flashlights, a battery-powered radio and extra batteries on hand.
- Set aside extra water and buy or make extra ice
- Have a phone that doesn't require electricity, either a standard telephone or a cell phone, rather than a cordless telephone.
- Keep your vehicle's gas tank at least half full.
- Make sure the battery in your smoke detector is fresh. Test the smoke detector to make sure it's working.
- Keep an appliance thermometer in the freezer. If the freezer is 40 degrees F or colder when the power returns, all the food is safe.

During

- Never use candles for emergency lighting, use flashlights
- Turn off or disconnect any appliances, equipment or electronics that were on when the power went out. When power comes back on, it may come back with momentary "surges" or "spikes" that can damage equipment such as computers and motors in appliances like the air conditioner, refrigerator, washer or furnace. Leave one light on so you know when the power returns.
- Avoid opening the refrigerator and freezer. This will help keep your food as fresh as possible. If you must eat food that was refrigerated or frozen, check it carefully for signs of spoilage.
- Use generators safely. If you have a portable generator, only run it outdoors with adequate ventilation. Never use a generator indoors or in attached garages. The exhaust fumes contain carbon monoxide which can be deadly if inhaled.
- Listen to the radio for updates.

After

- Do not refreeze any dairy products, seafood or food that has thawed completely. If in doubt, throw it out. Immediately throw out any food with a strange color or odor.

Downed Power Lines

- Stay away from downed power lines.