

# HAZARDS AND THREATS

## Power Outages

### Preparation Checklists and Other Information

Power Outages can cause a number of safety concerns; knowing the following information can help you and your loved ones.

#### **Before a Power Outage**

**(NOTE:** Register life-sustaining and medical equipment with your utility company.)

Every home should have these basic supplies in the event of a power outage

- First Aid Kit that includes family's prescription medications  
(NOTE: Make sure these items are in usable condition).
- Special needs items for babies, infants, seniors, disabled, access and functional needs family members.
- A battery or manually operated radio in order to access news reports.
- Fresh batteries for all necessary equipment.
- Bottled water for at least one gallon per person.
- Food that won't spoil and that doesn't need cooking to prepare.
- A manual can opener.
- Several coolers or ice chests store ice or other items if the power outage is lengthy.
- Consider buying a generator. When installing a generator, follow the instructions carefully. Keep your generator outside and run a cord inside. Don't connect your generator to main service panels—it's dangerous. Be sure to place a carbon monoxide detector indoors.
- Make sure disaster preparedness kit contains light sticks, flashlight, a battery-powered radio with extra batteries and a wind-up clock.

- Have a corded telephone available—cordless phones will not work when the power is out.
- Have a safe alternative heat source and supply of fuel. Never burn charcoal or use a generator indoors.
- Turning off lights and electrical appliances

### **You Should Also...**

- Keep important telephone numbers (fire department, paramedics, police, hospital, doctor, relatives, friends, etc.) by the telephone
- Place flashlights in handy locations, such as near telephones and desks
- Recommendation from utility companies – install surge protectors to help safeguard valuable electronic equipment such as computers and home entertainment systems
- Know where to find each utility shut off (electricity, water and gas) and how to turn each off. Have the proper tools to do so, and you know where they are located.
- Always back-up important work and files on your computer.
- If you have an automatic garage door or gate, make sure you know how to open them manually without power.
- Consider keeping at least one car fueled up as gas stations need electricity to pump gas and will shut down during a power outage.

**(NOTE:** Stockpiling gasoline is NOT recommended. Gasoline is hazardous, combustible substance. Portable gasoline generators should never be used inside homes, garages, office buildings or other enclosed spaces).

- Make a safety preparedness plan for your family that includes a list and location of the above items. Be prepared to meet the special needs of babies, infants, seniors, disabled and access and functional needs family members. Also, plan how to you will care for any pets.

- Candles can cause fire. It's far better to use battery-operated flashlights or glow sticks for lighting.

**(NOTE:** Using a kerosene heater, gas lantern or stove inside the house can be dangerous. Maintain proper ventilation at all times to avoid a build-up of toxic fumes, and be sure to have a carbon monoxide detector).

### **Keep Food Safe**

- Use and store food carefully to prevent foodborne illness when power outages make refrigeration unavailable.
- Use food first that can spoil most rapidly.
- Keep doors to refrigerator closed. Your refrigerator's freezer will keep food frozen for up to a day. A separate fully-loaded freezer will keep food frozen for two days.
- Use an ice chest packed with ice or snow to keep food cold. Buy dry ice to save frozen food. It's recommended don't handle dry ice with your bare hands. Use blocks or bags of ice to save refrigerator foods.
- Use caution if storing food outside during winter to keep it cold. The outside temperatures may vary especially in the sun. Frozen food may thaw and refrigerator food may become warm enough to grow bacteria. Food stored outside must be secured from contamination by animals.
- It's recommended by health experts, if in doubt, throw it out. Throw out meat, seafood, dairy products and cooked food that does not feel cold.
- It's advised by health experts, never taste suspected food. Even if food looks and smells fine, illness-causing bacteria may be present.

### **Safety Checklist - During Power Outage**

#### **Power Outage - Appliance Safety**

Turn your safety switch to "ON"

Knowing how to take of your electrical appliances before or during a power outage can help to ensure your safety, as well as help keep your appliances in working order.

- Use a surge protector to protect electrical items like your computer, television and DVD player. This can prevent a sudden surge of electricity from damaging them.
- Unplug all appliances (toasters, televisions, fans, lights, etc.), especially any that were being used when the power outage occurred.
- Don't open your refrigerator door unless you absolutely have to. If you open the refrigerator door, cold air will rush out and warm air will go in.
- Turn all lights to the "OFF" position, but leave one on so you will know when power is restored. Turn a bedroom light to the "ON" position if the power is still out when you go to sleep. This is to wake you up so you can check to make sure the food in your refrigerator is still good.

### **Power Outage - Traffic Safety**

Make safety the first place you go

A power outage can make driving dangerous. Traffic lights and streetlights don't work and there may be many emergency vehicles on the road. To keep you and your family safe, follow these safety tips.

#### **Be Alert**

Watch out for vehicles and pedestrians, and stop at all intersections even if you think you have the right of way. Don't drive if you are tired. Instead, pull over to the safest place as possible and rest. Even if you don't fall asleep behind the wheel, the combined effects of a power outage and fatigue make for dangerous driving.

#### **Cellular Phones**

Many people during a power outage use their cell phones to find out if family and friends are okay. And most of us know using a cell phone, with or without a headset, while driving is dangerous. If you witness an accident on the road or run into trouble, your cell phone can be a priceless tool. It's a matter of knowing when and when not to use it.

#### **You're not Alone**

Don't just look in the direction you expect traffic to be coming from; look on both sides of each lane. A dark road without working traffic lights can cause someone to drive on the wrong side of the road. It's also more difficult to see pedestrians.

## **Emergency Cash**

Credit cards won't work in a power outage, so it's common sense to carry some cash, coins with you at all the times.

## **Power Outage - Elevator Safety**

Your easiest way to safety

What to do if you are in a stalled/stopped elevator during a power outage:

### **Press the "Open" Door Button**

If you are near the landing the door is supposed to open. Then slowly and carefully step out of the elevator. Remember to watch your step, as the elevator may or may not be level with the landing.

### **Press the "Alarm" or "Help" Button**

Push the "Alarm" or "Help" button and wait for someone to respond to you. Trained emergency personnel will come to your assistance. Some elevators have a two-way speaker system or telephone. Don't be alarmed if you can't make an outgoing call. Some phones are designed to only receive calls. Emergency personnel should call when they arrive at the building. Provide them with as much detailed information as you can remember...floor number, elevator, time you have been in the elevator, how many people are in the elevator, any persons with medical conditions, etc.

### **Stay Calm but Make Noise**

Yell for help every few minutes or bang safely on the elevator door in order to attract attention. Don't try to exit through partially opened doors or a ceiling service door, both of which can be dangerous. Wait for trained emergency personnel to arrive. Even if it gets warm, there is plenty of air circulating in the elevator and shaftway.

### **Turning Off the Electricity**

- Locate your main electrical switch or fuse panel, and learn how to turn off the electrical power system.