



“Helping to maintain a healthy community”

## POWER OUTAGE FACT SHEET

# POWER OUTAGES

Electrical power can go out for any number of reasons. An unexpected outage can have unforeseen consequences. Without electricity, you may experience a shortage of food and clean water, as well as extreme temperatures. You should be prepared to manage without power for an extended period of time.

### ***Rolling Blackouts***

- Rolling blackouts, or temporary power shortages, may happen from time to time when power companies turn the power off in certain areas to curb usage.
- Rolling blackouts occur during peak seasons and hours and of energy consumption, usually in the summer, 4–7 p.m.
- Power companies try to warn affected areas of planned rolling blackouts, but not always
- The power is usually out for only about an hour.

### ***Summer Blackouts***

- Extreme heat is usually the cause of summer blackouts.
- Summer blackouts are dangerous because they eliminate the most effective ways to beat the heat: fans and air conditioning.
- In the absence of these means of keeping cool, make sure you stay hydrated.
- Take cold showers or baths to cool down.

### ***How to Prepare for a Power Outage***

- Make sure you have flashlights and batteries including a spare battery or hand-crank charger for your cell phone.
- Make sure you have a battery-operated or hand-crank radio or TV.
- Stockpile plenty of nonperishable food and bottled water.
- Back up computer files regularly.
- Get an emergency supply kit.
- Make a family emergency plan.

### ***What to Do If There Is a Power Outage***

- Use flashlights rather than candles for light to minimize risk of fire.
- Turn off the electrical equipment you were using when the power went out.
- Water purification systems may not be functioning when the power goes out, so water may be unsafe to use. Drink and use water that has been bottled, boiled or treated with iodine tablets and a filtration system.
- Try not to open the freezer or refrigerator too much. A full freezer should keep food for 48 hours.
- Pack dairy products, meat, fish, eggs, refrigerated medicines and other items that can quickly spoil in a cooler surrounded by ice to extend their usability.

Every citizen should maintain a basic level of preparedness for all potential hazards.

You are encouraged to get an emergency supply kit, make a family emergency plan and be informed about what might happen.

### ***What to Do If There Is a Power Outage (continued)***

- If the power goes out in extreme heat:
  - Stay hydrated, drinking a glass of water every 15–20 minutes.
  - Wear light-colored, loose-fitting clothing.
  - Keep indoor air circulating by opening doors and windows.
  - Be aware of the possibility for a heat-related injury.
  
- If the power goes out in extreme cold:
  - Wear several layers of warm clothing.
  - Keep moving to stay warm.
  - Be aware of the possibility of hypothermia, which happens when one's body temperature falls below 95°F.

### ***Where to Find Additional Information***

- American Red Cross – <http://www.redcross.org>
  
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) – <http://www.bt.cdc.gov>

**It's up to you. Prepare strong. Get an emergency supply kit with enough supplies for at least three days, make an emergency plan with your family and be informed about what might happen.**