

Preparing for Outages

Build Your Outage Supply Kit

- **First aid kit:** Include prescription medications – check the expiration dates.
- **Bottled water:** Experts recommend a gallon per person per day.
- **Flashlights and batteries:** Store them where you can find them easily in the dark.
- **Nonperishable food:** Choose items that don't require cooking or heating.
- **Manual can opener**
- **Coolers, ice chests, and ice packs:** Have a few in case of a lengthy outage.
- **Special-needs items:** This includes items for infants, the elderly, or the disabled.
- **Battery-operated radio:** To access news reports.
- **Fresh batteries:** For all battery-powered equipment.
- **External rechargeable battery pack:** To charge cell phones and other electronic devices.
- **Non-cordless phone:** To plug into landlines during power outages.

Outage Emergency Form

You can download and print an outage information sheet to keep track of important personal information during an outage, including emergency contacts, locations for supplies, and important medical information. Once you fill it out, post it on your refrigerator and share a copy with someone outside of your household in case of emergency.

Home preparation checklist

- Keep important phone numbers (fire department, paramedics, police, hospital, doctor, relatives, etc.) where they can be found easily in an emergency.
- Place flashlights in handy locations where they can be found easily in an emergency, including near your bed.
- Install surge protectors to help safeguard electronic equipment.
- Familiarize yourself with your home's utility boxes (electricity, water, and gas) and how to turn them off; keep the proper tools to do so handy. If necessary, post a note to help you remember how to turn them off in an emergency.
- Frequently back up important work and files on your computer.
- Know how to manually open your automatic garage doors or gates.
- Keep the gas tank or charge level in at least one car half full at all times.
- If you have a portable gas generator, identify an outdoor location where you can safely use it during a power outage and never use it indoors.

- Make a safety preparedness plan for your family, including a list and location of the above items, and a plan for meeting the special needs of infants, the elderly, those with medical needs, and family pets. Share this plan with someone outside your household.

Electronics and Appliances Tips

Electronics and appliances can be vulnerable to an outage. Follow these simple procedures to help keep you safe and protect them from damage.

- **Unplug** household appliances such as televisions, computer equipment, washers, dryers, game consoles, fans, and lights to prevent them from being damaged.
- **Use surge protectors** to help prevent damage to electronics.
- Turn off all light switches and lamps except for one. Leave one on so you'll know when power returns.

Food Safety Tips

Perishable foods in your refrigerator and freezer may not be safe to consume after an electric outage, depending on the length of the outage and outdoor temperatures. There are steps you can take to make sure your food is still safe to eat once the fridge is running again.

- **Keep the refrigerator closed**, opening doors only when necessary. Depending on the outside temperature, an unopened refrigerator can keep foods cold enough for several hours. Placing blocks of ice inside will also help keep food cold longer. Check food carefully for signs of spoilage.
- **Draw the line at 40 degrees.** Perishable foods should not be held above 40 degrees Fahrenheit for more than two hours.
- **Coolers and ice chests.** For outages lasting more than two hours, food items such as dairy products, meats, fish, poultry, eggs, and leftovers should be packed into a cooler with ice. A separate cooler can be packed with frozen items.
- **Canned and dry goods**, as well as powdered or boxed milk, can be eaten cold or warmed on a grill.
- **Leave a light on** when you go to bed. It will wake you when power returns so you can check the condition of your food.
- **If you're not home** when a power outage occurs, determine how long power has been out. Check the internal temperature of perishables in your refrigerator with a quick-response thermometer – any item above 40 degrees should be thrown out. If power comes back on within 24 hours, and your freezer is fairly full, your frozen items should be safe. If the refrigerator was out for more than 24 hours, you should get rid of perishables.

Medical Equipment Tips

Some people depend on uninterrupted power to operate medical equipment in their homes. We try our best to notify Medical Baseline customers before maintenance outages and rotating outages. Since we cannot guarantee uninterrupted service, you should always have a backup plan. This could mean a backup power system or other arrangements.

- **Our Critical Care Backup Battery (CCBB)** program is available at no cost to eligible customers requiring the use of an electrically powered medical device.
- **Develop an emergency or backup plan** with your medical equipment supplier. Some companies may supply additional medical equipment and other services during emergency situations.
- **Contact your local fire department** to learn whether they maintain a list of people with special medical needs. Adding you to their list may help them better respond to you during emergencies.
- **Keep emergency phone numbers handy in your cell phone contacts and near your landline.** This includes your doctor, police, fire, and durable medical equipment company (if applicable).
- **Develop contingency a plan** to go to another location in the event of a lengthy power outage. Share this plan with family, friends, and others that should be aware.

Generator Safety Tips

A backup power source can keep you up and running during a power outage. However, generators can be dangerous to you and our crews if connected or used improperly. Every year people die in portable-generator-related accidents. Before using a generator, you must consult an electrician to determine the proper equipment and safe set-up for your residence or business.

- **Equipment options:** Choose a generator rated for more power than you think you will need. This is best determined by an electrician.
- **Safety hazards:** The primary hazards to avoid when using a generator are carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning, electric shock, electrocution, and fire. Follow the directions supplied with your generator.
- **Getting connected:** Use a heavy-duty, outdoor extension cord to connect electrical equipment to a portable generator. Be sure the cord is rated more than the sum of the power drawn by the connected appliances. Make sure the cord has no cuts or tears, and that the plug has all three prongs, especially a grounding pin. Do not run a portable generator indoors, nor connect a portable generator to your home's electrical wiring or electrical panel. This can lead to serious injury or electrocution.
- **Beware of backfeeding:** Never try to power the house wiring by plugging a generator into a wall outlet. This is extremely dangerous and can electrocute utility workers and even neighbors. Electrocution is the fifth leading cause of all reported occupational deaths.
- **Work with an electrician:** If you wire a generator directly to your home, California state law mandates that you notify us. The only recommended method to connect a generator to house wiring is by having a licensed electrician install a power transfer switch, in compliance with national, state, and local electrical codes.
- **Portable vs. permanent:** Even a properly connected portable generator can become overloaded or overheated, stressing the generator components, which can lead to generator failure. For power outages, permanently installed, stationary generators are better suited for providing backup power to your home or business.

Tips for Driving During an Outage

A power outage can create driving hazards. Besides traffic and streetlights being out of service, there may be emergency or repair vehicles on the road. If you're driving during an outage, here are tips to stay safe:

- **Be extra cautious.** Watch out for vehicles and pedestrians. Stop at all intersections even if you think you have the right of way. All traffic lights that are out should be treated as four-way stop signs.
- **Don't drive tired.** Stay put or pull over. The combination of a power outage and fatigue can be dangerous.
- **Use cell phones sparingly.** The road needs your full attention, especially during an electric outage.
- **Be aware of others.** A dark road without working traffic lights can lead to unexpected conditions, such as encountering drivers on the wrong side of the road. Stay alert. You may also find it more difficult to see pedestrians if there is a streetlight outage.
- **Carry emergency cash.** Credit cards won't work during a power outage.
- **Charge your electric vehicle.** If you need to charge your EV during an outage, you can find options on [plugshare.com](https://www.plugshare.com)