



City of Hillsboro

# POWER OUTAGES

and

# ROLLING BLACKOUTS



*How well would your family endure a power outage similar to the one that struck the northeastern United States and Canada in August 2003?*

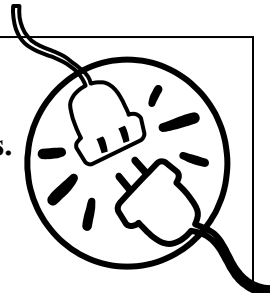
*There are steps you can take now to mitigate the future impacts of power outages.*

## **Before the Power Outage:**

- Assemble a family 72-hour disaster preparedness kit. Be sure you keep “all hazards” in mind when putting it together. The same preparedness items should be useful during power outages, floods, earthquakes, winter storms... You get the idea. Periodically rotate food items, medicine, batteries, and other perishables, so they are always ready to use; and make sure the sizing of extra clothing keeps up with your children’s growth spurts.
- Know where your electrical service is located – circuit or fuse box, and know how to turn the electricity on and off. While you’re at it, locate and learn to turn on/off your water and gas meters.
- Learn how to drain your hot water tank – a good source of potable water when the faucets don’t deliver.
- Keep your refrigerator and freezer at least half-full at all times. An unopened refrigerator will keep foods cold enough for a couple of hours, at least. A half-full freezer will hold for up to 24 hours and a full freezer for 48 hours. If your freezer isn’t at least half full, add 2-liter pop bottles filled with water until it is. Not only will it help your freezer run more efficiently, but you’ll have ice to keep the food cold during a power outage. If your freezer is only partially full when power goes out, move frozen items together and stack on top of each other.
- Stock some coolers – the cheap Styrofoam™ ones work well – to preserve food temperature during prolonged outages.
- Have an alternate means of cooking – your fireplace, BBQ grill, camp stove, etc. (Remember to NEVER use charcoal or propane indoors.) If you have a gas kitchen stove, know how to manually light the burners. The electronic ignition will not work during a power outage.
- If you don’t already have one, purchase a digital, quick-reading kitchen thermometer. You will use the thermometer to check whether food should be discarded after an extended power outage.
- Locate the manual release on your electric garage door, and learn how to use it. If you use the electric garage door opener as your primary entry, be sure you also keep a house key with you.
- Have at least one telephone that does not require electricity to work. Cordless phones and answering machines will not work when the power is out.
- Keep your car’s gas tank at least half full. Gas stations rely on electricity to power their pumps.

### **Seven steps to restoring power:**

1. **Protect public safety.**
2. **Check generation facilities.**
3. **Repair transmission lines.**
4. **Repair substations.**
5. **Repair distribution lines.**
6. **Repair tap lines.**
7. **Connect individual customers whose power is out.**



## During a Power Outage:

- Use flashlights or light sticks for emergency lighting. NEVER use candles, because of the potential for fire.
- If driving during a power outage, treat traffic signal outages as 4-way stops.
- Turn off or unplug all appliances and all lights except one interior light and one porch light. If you go to bed and the power is still out, leave your bedroom light turned on. It will go on when the power returns and awaken you, so you can check on the condition of your food before turning refrigerator and freezer back on.
- Move milk, cheese, meats, refrigerated medicines, and other perishables into coolers, along with as much ice as you can fit. Cover the coolers with blankets for additional insulation.
- Use the telephone for emergencies only. Do not call 9-1-1 for information – only call to report a life-threatening emergency.
- Listen to a battery-operated radio or television, or your car radio, for local news updates.
- Be prepared for family members to go through withdrawal from video games, TV, and internet surfing. Have board games, playing cards, and other forms of family entertainment on hand.



## After Power is Restored:

- Use your digital, quick response kitchen thermometer to check whether food should be discarded. If frozen food still has ice crystals and is not above 40°, you can refreeze. Perishable foods in the refrigerator should not be above 40° for more than two hours. If in doubt, throw it out!
- Replace any items you used from your 72-hour disaster preparedness kit.
- Make a to-do list of things you should have done to prepare for a power outage – and do them!



## For People With Disabilities:

- If you use a battery-operated wheelchair, life-support system, or other power-dependent equipment, call your power company before rolling blackouts happen. Some keep a list of power-dependent customers. Ask them what alternatives are available to you.
- If you use a motorized wheelchair or scooter, keep an extra battery charged and ready. A car battery can also be used, if necessary; but it will not last as long as one designed for wheelchair use.
- If you are blind or have a visual disability, store a battery-operated talking or Braille clock or large-print timepiece and extra batteries.
- If you are deaf or have a hearing loss, consider a battery-operated television. Local stations may provide emergency information in American Sign Language or open captioning.

## Using a Generator:

- When considering purchase of a generator, get advice from a licensed professional, such as an electrician. Make sure the generator is listed with Underwriter's Laboratories or a similar testing organization.
- Always plan to keep the generator outdoors – NEVER operate it inside.
- DO NOT hook it up directly to your home's wiring. A manual or automatic transfer switch is required to switch from your commercial power source to your generator. The safest thing to do is to connect the equipment you want to power directly to the outlets on the generator using indoor/outdoor, 3-pronged extension cords.
- Be prepared for company! When you're the only house on the block with lights on, people notice!

