

POWER OUTAGE CHECKLIST

What to do in a power outage: first hours, carbon monoxide safety, food safety times, water, medicines, days 1 to 3, and days 4 to 7.

■ WARNING

Never run a generator, pressure washer, or any gasoline engine inside your home, basement, or garage, or less than 20 feet from any window, door, or vent. Never heat your home with a gas range or oven. Carbon monoxide is colorless and odorless and can kill people and pets. [1][2][4]

CARBON MONOXIDE [1][2]

- Have a battery-powered or battery backup CO detector on every level.
- Use an extension cord more than 20 feet long for the generator.
- Keep camp stoves and charcoal grills outdoors, at least 20 feet from windows.
- Keep the generator dry. Let it cool before refueling.
- Symptoms: headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, confusion. People asleep or drinking can die before symptoms.

FOOD SAFETY TIMES [1][3]

Doors closed:

APPLIANCE	KEEPS FOOD SAFE ABOUT
Refrigerator	4 hours
Full freezer	48 hours
Half-full freezer	24 hours

- After 4 hours without power or ice, throw out fridge meat, fish, cut produce, eggs, milk, and leftovers.
- Thawed freezer food with ice crystals or at 40°F or below can be refrozen or cooked.
- Discard food at 40°F or higher for 2 hours or more, or that smells, looks, or feels unusual.
- Never taste food to test it. When in doubt, throw it out.

WATER AND MEDICINES [2][5][6][7]

- Store at least 1 gallon per person per day for several days.
- Follow any boil-water notice.
- After a day or more without power, throw away refrigerated medicine, except a drug someone's life depends on: use it until a new supply arrives.

- Insulin can stay unrefrigerated between 59°F and 86°F for up to 28 days. Do not let it freeze; do not use frozen insulin.
- Ask a pharmacist or provider whether a medicine kept at the wrong temperature is still usable.

FIRST HOURS

- ☐ Keep the refrigerator and freezer closed
- ☐ Unplug appliances and electronics
- ☐ Use flashlights, not candles
- ☐ Stay away from downed power lines
- ☐ Check on anyone who needs medicine or powered medical equipment
- ☐ Report the outage and note the restoration estimate

DAYS 1 TO 3

- ☐ Throw out perishable fridge food after 4 hours without power or ice
- ☐ Check fridge and freezer thermometers
- ☐ Call your pharmacist about refrigerated medicine after a day
- ☐ Let the generator cool before refueling
- ☐ Test CO detector batteries
- ☐ Move to a warming or cooling location if needed

DAYS 4 TO 7

- ☐ Eat from nonperishable food stores
- ☐ Track water against 1 gallon per person per day
- ☐ Follow any boil-water notice
- ☐ Replace refrigerated medicine as soon as possible
- ☐ Go to a shelter if heat, cold, or a medical device makes home unsafe

AFTER POWER RETURNS

- ☐ Discard food held at 40°F or higher for 2 hours or more
- ☐ Replace refrigerated medicine that sat warm over a day
- ☐ Restock water, batteries, and food

IN AN EMERGENCY CALL 911. INSTRUCTIONS FROM LOCAL OFFICIALS COME FIRST.

Sources: [1] Ready.gov, Power Outages (ready.gov). [2] CDC, What to Do to Protect Yourself During a Power Outage (cdc.gov). [3] CDC, Keep Food Safe After a Disaster or Emergency (cdc.gov). [4] CDC, Generator Safety Fact Sheet (cdc.gov). [5] Ready.gov, Water (ready.gov). [6] FDA, Safe Drug Use After a Natural Disaster (fda.gov). [7] FDA, Information Regarding Insulin Storage and Switching Between Products in an Emergency (fda.gov).
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