

# 10 Things to Do to Prepare for a Power Outage

Power outages – Despite predictions, it can be impossible to know the damage a natural disaster will cause until it has already hit. This is especially true with power outages. In the case of past ice storms, thousands of people were left without power and no sense of when they would get it back. We've outlined 10 things to do to prepare for a power outage. Being prepared will help keep you as calm and safe as possible if you do lose power in your home and along with a Weather Emergency Radio.

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## Put together a power outage emergency kit

When the lights go out, the last thing you want is to be scrambling for supplies. It can be dangerous to reach into drawers or shuffle through closets when you can't see what's in there. While you do have power, assemble everything you might need in one container. A plastic storage box or duffel bag is a good option. Put the kit in a location that's easy to access so you won't have to shuffle through things to find it when you need it. It's most likely best to have this on the main level of your home so you can hopefully avoid stairs. Everyone in the house should know where it is, so the person nearest to it can retrieve it and be in a better position to safely help others.

## Buy an emergency weather radio

There are excellent options for emergency weather radios. Many operate with solar power or with a hand crank. What's great is they won't drain your batteries or require a generator to operate. Invest in one and keep it in your power outage emergency box. They are portable so you can take it with you should you ever need to evacuate.

## Have flashlights and batteries for everyone

There are excellent choices available that you will likely find many uses for in your everyday life, not just emergencies. Inevitably, the first thing everyone asks for when the lights go out is a flashlight. Having one will make everyone feel instantly safer and calmer, regardless of if the power outage is likely to last

for days or just a couple of hours. It provides a sense of security to have some control over even the smallest amount of light. When you're putting together your emergency kit, you could account for one flashlight for every member of your family. It may be more than you need, but each person being able to hold on to their own could make a difference in their feeling of safety. Also be sure to include several packages of the right kinds of batteries. You may also consider a solar lantern to brighten up your evening, especially if you want to read or play games with your family.

## **Be able to purify water**

There are so many options available now to purify water. Even if you have enough water in storage, it's a good idea to purchase a LifeStraw or other way, such as tablets. This is different than a water filtration system.

## **Buy a food thermometer**

You may already have a food thermometer in your kitchen. If not, it's worth purchasing one for use during an emergency. When the power goes out, you should try to avoid going into your refrigerator as much as possible. If you're only without electricity for a short time, your food may be safe to eat when the lights come back on. A food thermometer will allow you to test the internal temperature of any perishable food that was in your fridge or freezer during an outage. If you're unsure if something is still safe to eat, the internal temperature will let you know.

## **Stock up on non-perishable food and water**

The moment you hear a big storm could be heading for your area you should check on your supply of bottled water and non-perishable foods. Avoid the crowded stores and empty shelves by taking the forecasts seriously and shop early. For water, a good rule of thumb is one gallon of water per person per day. If you have children, stock up on their favorite non-perishable foods. You may want to have a small stash of their favorite cereals, dried fruit, and other treats. Start a small area in your home where you can begin storing an emergency food supply. You can buy foods you enjoy regularly and work your way through them, replenishing as necessary. Planning food storage survival is something you can do when you see items on sale so you will always be prepared.

## **Be prepared to cook**

Wouldn't it be great to be able to heat up some of those canned food items you bought? You can enjoy warm foods during a power outage with a solar oven or rocket stove. Boil water for pasta or mac and cheese using an eco stove. Enjoy warm soups and vegetables that you heat up in your solar oven. You may find lots of recreational uses for your rocket stove even when there isn't an emergency, such as camping, scouting, etc.

## **Buy a portable generator**

Having a backup power source is a smart investment, particularly if you live in an area of the country that is affected by hurricanes. Purchasing a portable generator will allow you to keep electronics running even after you lose your main power sources. There are a wide variety of models available depending on functionality preferences and budget. Portable generators today are quieter and lighter so that you can use them camping and for other uses too. In the event that an extreme power outage does occur, it will become your most valuable possession.

## **Get together and stay together**

There's no telling where in your home you'll be during the exact moment the power goes out. However, if at all possible, everyone should gather together in one room. This includes your pets. This will make it easier to share the supplies, like water and flashlights, you've stored in your emergency kit. If you lose power during the winter, being closer together will also produce more body heat to keep everyone warmer. Think about what the safest room in your house is given the particular natural disaster you're experiencing. If things suddenly get worse, and you need to evacuate, you'll be in the best position to do so. You'll have everyone accounted for.

## **Have activities**

During any power outage, the first concern is for everyone's safety. Once that is secured, boredom can quickly set in and make everyone feel a little less calm. This is especially true during a power outage caused by a routine thunderstorm, or one that has the potential to last for days. Along with the emergency supplies you've prepared, include some easy, fun activities to pass the time. This could include word games and puzzles or books and magazines. Especially if you have younger kids, keeping everyone occupied will distract them. Kids may enjoy snuggling with a stuffed animal. Having something routine to pay attention to will make everyone feel safer. The time until the lights come back will go by much faster, and the experience won't seem quite as scary.

## **Prepare for a power outage**

It's not just ice storms that leave us in the dark. Strong thunderstorms and downed power lines can cause homes to lose electricity at any time. Whether or not you live in a natural disaster zone, it's important you and your family need to know what to do if a power outage occurs. You want to be prepared before it happens so that you don't panic. Now is the time to prepare for a power outage. Doing so will enable you to plan and budget. You can shop for sales on nonperishable items. You can start creating an area to store your emergency kit and your water and food. Storms and natural disasters can come when you least expect them to. That's why it is so important to prepare as much as possible for a power outage... before the lights go out.