

Power outages can happen at any time for a number of reasons, with the risk of both planned and unplanned outages of particular concern currently. Any power outage is bound to bring some sort of inconvenience but managing that inconvenience and staying safe is possible with just a bit of preparation.

We have pulled together a suggested checklist that you can share with residents to help them protect themselves and their homes during any outages.

Before a power outage

There are a few things residents should think about that will help them no matter when the outage comes. Such as:

- ✓ Staying warm: Stock up on thick blankets, bedding and clothing.
- ✓ Alternative lighting: Candles may look nice, but they're a fire and health hazard and should be avoided. Having a torch with batteries means you won't drain your phone battery, which you might need in an emergency. Getting a solar lantern that can recharge without plugging in or LED lanterns with long-lasting batteries are two other ways to safely light your house.
- ✓ Food: Try and keep some non perishable foods that don't require cooking in your cupboards such as canned meats, fish, vegetables and fruit or nuts, dried fruits and energy bars
- ✓ Communication: Charge mobile phones, power banks, laptops and other devices. Although landlines are likely to still work even in a power cut many homes no longer have one..
- ✓ Key numbers: Make sure you have your utility's emergency number written down somewhere. If you smell a gas leak, you don't want to be reliant on Wi-Fi to pull up your utility's emergency number.
- ✓ First aid kit: make sure it is easily accessible.
- ✓ Something to do: Have some entertainment ready, books, board games, jigsaw puzzles: anything that doesn't need electricity to work. The biggest enemy during power outages will be boredom, particularly for young children and young adults.

During a power outage

When the power does go out:

- Do not open fridges or freezers as the cold air will escape.
- If the property has a hot water tank don't take a shower or bath –save that water for hot water bottles, since the tank will stay warm for a while after the power goes out.
- Unplug electronic equipment including computers, TVs, sound systems, chargers, air fryers, microwaves and ovens. There may be a small possibility of power surges once on the power comes back on, so unplugging will avoid damage and keep people safe.
- Secure vulnerable pets
- Check on vulnerable neighbours who may need help

When the power comes back on

The power will all come back at once, but that doesn't mean things will work perfectly right away, lots of things may need resetting.

- ✓ Check the fuse box for flipped trip switches
- ✓ Reset clocks and timers
- ✓ Reset Wi-Fi
- ✓ Check your refrigerator and freezer for any spoiled food. Some foods, like ice cream, are unsafe to refreeze
- ✓ Check on vulnerable neighbours