

Your 72-hour outage plan

What to charge, freeze and fill, from the forecast through day 3.



Household Solar

Most outages end within hours, but storms can stretch them to days. Work through this list top to bottom and you'll be ready for the first 72 hours.

1 to 3 days before a storm

Charge

- ☐ Phones, power banks and laptops
- ☐ Portable power station
- ☐ Flashlights and spare batteries

Freeze

- ☐ Water bottles to fill freezer gaps
- ☐ Gel packs for a cooler
- ☐ Set fridge and freezer to their coldest settings

Fill

- ☐ Drinking water: 1 gallon per person per day
- ☐ Bathtub or buckets for flushing (not drinking)
- ☐ Car gas tank, and get some cash

- ☐ Refill prescriptions
- ☐ Test smoke and carbon monoxide alarms
- ☐ Learn to open the garage door by hand
- ☐ Check on neighbors who may need help

The first hours

- ☐ Report the outage
Call your utility or check its outage map.
- ☐ Unplug electronics and big appliances
Protects them from a surge when power returns.
- ☐ Leave one light switched on
So you know when the power is back.
- ☐ Write down the time the power went out
- ☐ Use flashlights, not candles
Candles are a fire risk.

Night 1 and day 1

- ☐ Keep the fridge and freezer closed
Fridge: safe for about 4 hours. Full freezer: about 48.
- ☐ After 4 hours, move perishables to a cooler with ice
- ☐ Power what matters from your battery
Phones, Wi-Fi, CPAP, and the fridge in cycles.
- ☐ Too hot or cold at home?
Find a local cooling or warming center.

● Days 2 and 3

- ☐ Sort food with our food safety guide
When in doubt, throw it out.
- ☐ Recharge the battery
With solar panels or from your car while driving.
- ☐ Check on older neighbors and anyone
living alone
- ☐ Keep phones on low-power mode and use
texts

● Carbon monoxide can kill

- Never run a generator, grill, camp stove or charcoal indoors, in a garage, or near windows, doors or vents. Keep generators at least 20 feet away.
- Never heat your home with a gas oven or stove.
- Headache, dizziness, weakness or nausea? Get into fresh air and call 911.
- Stay away from downed power lines, and never plug a generator into a wall outlet.

● Our numbers

Electric company outage line

Out-of-town contact

Nearest cooling or warming center

Based on Ready.gov (FEMA) power outage guidance, FoodSafety.gov and CDC carbon monoxide guidance.

Emergency supply checklist



For houses and apartments. Tick items off as you pack them.

Pack supplies in airtight bags inside one or two easy-to-carry containers, like a plastic bin or duffel bag. Keep the kit in one place and make sure everyone in your home knows where it is.

● Water and food

- ☐ Water: 1 gallon per person, per day
For drinking and sanitation, for several days.
Plan for at least 3.
- ☐ Non-perishable food for several days
Foods that need no refrigeration, cooking or water.
- ☐ Manual can opener
- ☐ Paper plates, cups, utensils and paper towels
- ☐ Pet food and extra water for pets

● Power and light

- ☐ Flashlight for each person
- ☐ Extra batteries
- ☐ Battery-powered or hand-crank radio
Ideally a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert.
- ☐ Phone chargers and a backup battery
- ☐ Optional: portable power station
For a fridge, Wi-Fi or medical device. Size it at householdsolar.com.

● Sanitation

- ☐ Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties
For personal sanitation.
- ☐ Soap, hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes
- ☐ Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items
- ☐ Baby supplies if needed
Formula, bottles, diapers, wipes, rash cream.

● Health and safety

- ☐ First aid kit
- ☐ Extra supply of prescription medications
Keep a list of names and doses, too.
- ☐ Pain relievers, antacids and anti-diarrhea medicine
- ☐ Glasses and contact lens solution
- ☐ Dust masks
To help filter contaminated air.
- ☐ Whistle
To signal for help.
- ☐ Fire extinguisher
- ☐ Smoke and carbon monoxide alarms with fresh batteries

● Tools and documents

- ☐ Wrench or pliers
To turn off utilities.
- ☐ Plastic sheeting, scissors and duct tape
To shelter in place.
- ☐ Local paper maps
- ☐ Matches in a waterproof container
- ☐ Cash in small bills
- ☐ Copies of important documents
IDs, insurance policies and bank records, in a waterproof container or saved electronically.
- ☐ Paper and pencil

● Comfort

- ☐ Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person
- ☐ A change of clothes and sturdy shoes for each person
- ☐ Books, games and puzzles for kids

● Living in an apartment?

- **Elevators stop when the power goes out.** Know two stairway routes out of your building, and plan now for anyone who can't manage stairs.
- **Upper floors can lose water pressure** when building pumps lose power. Fill water containers before a storm.
- **Never run a generator, grill or camp stove indoors, in a hallway or on a balcony.** Carbon monoxide can build up fast and drift inside.
- **Short on space?** One under-bed bin holds a basic kit. Stack water in the back of a closet.
- **Tell your building manager** if someone in your home relies on powered medical equipment.
- **Review your renters insurance** so you know what is and isn't covered.

● Living in a house?

- **Know how to shut off water, gas and electricity,** and keep the tool next to each shutoff. If you turn off the gas, only a professional should turn it back on.
- **Test your sump pump and its backup** before storm season.
- **Keep a smaller kit in each car:** water, snacks, a blanket, a flashlight and a phone charger.
- **Plan for your garage door:** learn how to open it by hand before you need to.
- **Generators stay outside,** at least 20 feet from windows, doors and vents.

● Keep it ready

- ☐ Store canned food in a cool, dry place
- ☐ Replace expired items
- ☐ Keep boxed food in tightly closed plastic or metal containers
- ☐ Rethink your kit every year as your family's needs change

Tip: check your kit twice a year, on the days the clocks change.

● Our household's water math

_____ × _____ = _____
People Days (at least 3) Gallons to store Pets: extra gallons

Based on the Ready.gov (FEMA) emergency supply checklist, with apartment and house tips from Household Solar. Carbon monoxide distance guidance from the CDC.

Keep food safe in an outage



Household Solar

What to keep, what to toss, and how to make your cold last longer.

4 hours

A closed refrigerator keeps food safe for up to 4 hours.

48 hours

A full, closed freezer holds a safe temperature. Half full: about 24 hours.

40°F

Toss perishables that sat at 40°F or warmer for more than 2 hours.

● Before the outage

- ☐ Put thermometers in the fridge and freezer
So you can check temperatures, not guess.
- ☐ Freeze containers of water and gel packs
They keep food cold longer.
- ☐ Group frozen food together; it stays cold longer
- ☐ Have a cooler ready
For fridge items if the outage runs past 4 hours.
- ☐ Know where to buy dry ice or block ice
- ☐ Stock food that needs no refrigeration or cooking

● During and after

- ☐ Keep the fridge and freezer doors closed
Every opening lets cold out.
- ☐ Write down the time the power went out
- ☐ After 4 hours, move milk, meat and leftovers to a cooler with ice
- ☐ Check each item's temperature when power returns
- ☐ Never taste food to decide if it's safe
Harmful bacteria don't always change the taste or smell.
- ☐ When in doubt, throw it out

● Frozen food

Food that still has ice crystals, or is at 40°F or below, can be safely refrozen, though the texture may suffer. Toss ice cream and frozen yogurt that has thawed. Hard cheese, bread, flour and nuts can be refrozen even after warming. Meat, poultry, seafood and frozen meals held above 40°F for more than 2 hours should be thrown out.

● Refrigerated food after more than 2 hours above 40°F

Throw out	OK to keep
Raw or cooked meat, poultry, fish and seafood	Hard cheeses (cheddar, Swiss, Parmesan) and processed cheese
Lunch meat, hot dogs, bacon, sausage	Butter and margarine
Milk, cream, sour cream, yogurt	Uncut fresh fruit and vegetables
Soft cheeses (brie, mozzarella, cottage, cream cheese), shredded and low-fat cheese	Opened fruit juices and canned fruit
Eggs and egg dishes, custards, puddings	Peanut butter, jelly, mustard, ketchup, pickles, olives
Cooked pasta, rice and potatoes	Soy, Worcestershire and barbecue sauces
Cut fruit, cut vegetables, bagged salad greens	Opened vinegar-based dressings
Casseroles, soups, stews, pizza	Bread, rolls, tortillas, bagels, waffles
Opened creamy dressings, opened spaghetti sauce	Fruit pies
Opened baby formula	
Opened mayonnaise and tartar sauce, if above 50°F for more than 8 hours	

Based on FoodSafety.gov and USDA guidance, "Food Safety During Power Outage" (last reviewed by the agency August 2024). This is a summary: check the full charts at [foodsafety.gov](https://www.foodsafety.gov) for items not listed here.

Family communication plan



Household Solar

Who to call, where to meet and what everyone needs to know.

You may not be together when something happens. Fill this in together, keep a copy by the fridge and in each go-bag, and save the key numbers in every phone.

● Our household

Home address

Home phone

Name	Cell phone	Email	Medical needs or allergies

● Out-of-town contact

Someone far away can be easier to reach than someone local when networks are busy. Everyone checks in with this person.

Name

Phone

Email

● Local emergency contact

A nearby friend or neighbor who can help or pick up kids.

Name

Phone

Email

● Where we meet

In our neighborhood

Outside our neighborhood

Out of town

Example: the big oak tree by the mailbox.

Example: the public library on Main St.

Example: Grandma's house.

🔵 Schools, childcare and work

Ask each place about its emergency plan and where kids are picked up if they evacuate.

Name of place	Address	Phone	Emergency pickup spot

🔵 Medical

Doctor and phone

Pharmacy and phone

Health insurance and policy number

Medications and doses

🟡 Utilities and pets

Electric company outage line

Water and gas companies

Veterinarian and phone

Pet microchip numbers

🟡 Make it stick

Text, don't call. Texts often get through when phone lines are jammed.

Save an "ICE" contact (In Case of Emergency) in every phone.

Practice twice a year. Walk to your meeting spot and have kids recite one phone number.

Cut out a wallet card for each person

Our emergency plan

Out-of-town contact

Phone

Meeting place

Medical notes

Our emergency plan

Out-of-town contact

Phone

Meeting place

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Based on the Ready.gov (FEMA) Family Emergency Communication Plan.