

HOME & COMMUNITY

Power outage: immediate household actions

Use safe lighting, protect chilled food and decide early whether it is safe to remain at home.

Carbon-monoxide alarm or symptoms such as headache, dizziness and confusion: get outside and call 911.

When the lights go out

- Check for a wider outage without approaching damaged wiring. Report it to your utility and follow official local updates.
- Use flashlights or battery lanterns. Keep an accessible light near stairs and avoid flames as a routine substitute.
- Check on people who depend on powered medical equipment or may be affected quickly by loss of heating or cooling.

Keep dangerous fumes outside

- Never use a fuel-powered generator inside a house, garage or enclosed space, even with doors open.
- Place it outdoors more than 20 feet from windows, doors and vents. Use working battery-powered or battery-backup carbon-monoxide alarms.
- Do not use a gas oven, charcoal grill or outdoor camp stove to heat a room. Leave if a CO alarm sounds.

Protect food and medicines

- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed. CDC gives about four hours for a closed refrigerator, 48 for a full freezer and 24 for a half-full freezer.
- Use an appliance thermometer and a cooler with ice if available. Refrigerated perishables need to remain at 40 degrees F or below.
- Never taste food to test safety. Discard unsafe perishables and ask your pharmacist about medicines whose storage temperature was exceeded.

Choose the next safe step

- If temperature, equipment failure or a care need makes staying unsafe, move to a suitable location before the situation worsens.
- Keep away from fallen lines and water around electrical equipment. Do not try to repair utility wiring.
- Record when power failed and returned. Restock supplies, recharge batteries and review your longer-outage plan afterward.

Sources & further guidance

[CDC - power outage safety](https://www.cdc.gov/power-outage-safety) | www.cdc.gov

[CDC - food after an emergency](https://www.cdc.gov/food-after-an-emergency) | www.cdc.gov

[CDC - carbon-monoxide prevention](https://www.cdc.gov/carbon-monoxide-prevention) | www.cdc.gov