

## BE PREPARED FOR **POWER OUTAGES**

A power outage is when the electrical power goes out unexpectedly and it can happen at any time of year.

Extended power outages may impact the whole community and the economy.

It may:

- Disrupt communications, water, and transportation
- Close retail businesses, grocery stores, gas stations, ATMs, banks, and other services
- Cause food spoilage and water contamination
- Prevent use of medical devices



ReadyWisconsin is a campaign of Wisconsin Emergency Management, a division of the Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs.

ReadyWisconsin seeks to educate and empower people to prepare for and respond to disasters.

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# **POWER OUTAGES**





## PREPARE NOW

- Take an inventory of items that rely on electricity.
- Talk to your medical provider about a power outage plan for medical devices powered by electricity and refrigerated medications.
- Plan for batteries and other alternatives to meet your needs when the power goes out.
- Sign up for local community alerts and warnings to receive updates on situations.
- Install carbon monoxide detectors with a battery backup.
- Determine if your home phone will work in a power outage.
- Review emergency kit supplies in case of no power.
- Use a thermometer in the refrigerator and freezer so you know the temperature when power is restored.
- Keep mobile phones and other devices charged.

## PROTECT YOURSELF DURING A POWER OUTAGE

- Call your utility to report outages, **DO NOT CALL 9-1-1.**
- Do not touch trees or limbs on power lines.
- Stay away from downed power lines. If you see a downed line, call your utility provider.
- Keep freezers and refrigerators closed. A refrigerator will keep food cold for about four hours. A full freezer will keep the temperature for about 48 hours.
- Use a generator, but only outdoors and at least 20 feet away from windows and vents.
- Do not use a gas stove or a grill indoors to heat your home.
- Disconnect appliances and electronics to avoid damage from electrical surges.
- Have alternate plans to refrigerate medicines or to use power-dependent medical devices.
- Check with local officials about heating and cooling locations that are available and open near you.
- **DURING SUMMER:** Take steps to remain cool such as heading to your basement. Consider going to a public place or cooling center that has air conditioning.
- **DURING WINTER:** Close blinds or curtains to retain heat. Close off rooms to avoid wasting heat. Wear layers of loose-fitting, lightweight warm clothing. Stuff towels or rags in cracks under doors.
- Check on neighbors to make sure they are okay.

## AFTER A POWER OUTAGE

- Throw away refrigerated or thawed food exposed to temperatures of 40°F or higher for two hours or more, or food that has an unusual odor, color, or texture. **WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT.**
- Check your insurance policy for coverage for food loss after an outage.
- If power is out for more than a day, discard any refrigerated medication unless the label says otherwise. Contact your doctor or pharmacist for a new supply.

