

Be Prepared for a Power Outage

Power outages can occur due to extreme weather or other events. If a major storm is near your home, follow news reports on television or radio. Make sure you are prepared in the event a power outage happens. Have certain items on hand at all times and have a plan of action.

Supplies:

- Nonperishable food (canned and packaged goods)
- Manual can opener
- Bottled water (one quart per person, per day)
- Water purifying tablets
- Prescription medications
- Supplies needed for young children and pets
- Flashlights and extra batteries (candles are a fire hazard)
- Battery-powered radio
- First aid kit and handbook
- Personal hygiene supplies such as disposable cleaning cloths, soap, and toothpaste
- A list of emergency phone numbers for police, fire, utility, and paramedics
- Extra blankets or sleeping bags
- Small amount of cash (ATMs may not work during an outage)

Plan of action:

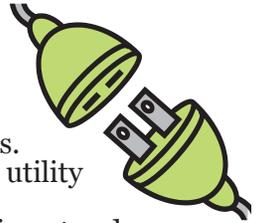
- Protect electrical equipment with a voltage surge protector.

- Keep your gas tank at least half full in case you need to travel.
- Notify your utility company if someone in your household requires power to use medical equipment so this information can be noted on your account.
- Have arrangements in place for the care of infants, elderly, and physically impaired.
- If you have a cordless phone, it will not work during a power outage. You may want to consider having at least one corded telephone. Some types of landline phone service — such as that provided over the Internet or through cable TV — may not work during a power outage unless you have a generator or battery back-up for power. If you use a cell phone, consider purchasing a car charger since cell phone batteries cannot be recharged without electricity.
- Know evacuation routes. If you do evacuate, shut off electricity, gas, and water at the breaker box or meter.
- In the event that flooding is possible, keep important papers in watertight containers and move valuable items to upper floors.

During a Power Outage

- If you lose power, first check the fuse box to see if a fuse is blown or tripped.
- Find out whether neighboring homes have lost power. If so, ask if a neighbor has already called the utility company.

- Contact your local utility company to report an outage.
- Do not go near downed power lines. Report them to the utility company.
- Avoid opening refrigerator doors. If a power outage is less than two hours, food will be safe to consume. Check food safety guidelines in the event an outage is longer. Perishable foods can be moved to the freezer to keep them cool longer.
- Unplug appliances to avoid a surge when power is restored.
- Check for electrical damage inside your home — frayed wires, sparks, or the smell of burning insulation.
- If you use a portable generator, follow the manufacturer's instructions.
 - **Never** run a generator indoors or in an attached garage. There is a risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.
 - **Do not** connect a generator to household wiring.
- **Do not** use charcoal or gas grills indoors as a source of heat. There is also a risk of carbon monoxide poisoning with charcoal.



After Power Has Been Restored

- Wait a few minutes before turning on lights.
- Plug appliances in one at a time.

For More Information

Contact your utility or visit their website for tips on handling power outages and information on their procedure for restoring power.



Duke Energy 1-800-777-9898
www.duke-energy.com

Lockhart Power 1-800-368-1289
www.lockhartpower.com

Piedmont Natural Gas 1-800-752-7504
www.piedmontng.com

Progress Energy 1-800-452-2777
www.progress-energy.com

SCE&G 1-800-251-7234
www.scana.com/SCEG

References:

American Red Cross. *Fact Sheet: Safety information for Short-term Power Outages or "Rolling Blackouts"*

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *What You Need To Know When the Power Goes Out Unexpectedly*

Questions?

The ORS Can Help

The Consumer Services Division of the Office of Regulatory Staff can help by arranging payment plans with your electric and gas utility and by directing you to social service agencies that may have available funds to assist with energy costs.

Phone 803-737-5230 (Columbia, S.C.)
1-800-922-1531 (toll-free in S.C.)

803-737-5175 TTY (Columbia, S.C.)
1-800-334-2217 TTY (toll-free in S.C.)

Fax 803-737-4750

Web www.regulatorystaff.sc.gov

Hours 8:30 a.m.—5:00 p.m.
Monday through Friday
(closed state holidays)

About the ORS

The S.C. Office of Regulatory Staff (ORS) was created in 2004 by the S.C. General Assembly.

The ORS represents the public interest of South Carolina in utility regulation with regard to rates, charges, service standards, facilities, and practices of the major utility industries - electric, natural gas, telecommunications, water/wastewater, and transportation - before the Public Service Commission of South Carolina (PSC), the court system, the S.C. General Assembly, and federal regulatory bodies. The ORS has responsibility for oversight of railroad safety and natural gas pipeline safety in the state.

In fulfilling this mission, the ORS strives to balance the concerns of the using and consuming public, the financial integrity of public utilities, and the economic development of South Carolina.

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Information for Consumers