

## Review the Safety Basics

Most electric and gas safety rules are common sense – but it's easy to get careless, especially if you're distracted or in a hurry. Take a few minutes to look around your home for ways to eliminate potential safety hazards.



### The right way:

**DO** cover all electrical outlets and wall switches with cover plates, and replace any that are damaged.

**DO** make sure all electrical devices are in good repair.

**DO** use extension cords and “cheater” plugs only on a temporary basis.

**DO** use a quality surge suppresser with enough sockets for every component.

**DO** keep all electrical devices away from water sources.

**DO** flag the fuse or breaker switch so no one else touches it while you're working.

**DO** install a [carbon monoxide](#) detector near the living and sleeping areas of your home.

**DO** leave at least 18 inches of clearance around your gas furnace and water heater, and at least one inch around gas stoves and clothes dryers.

**DO** keep paints, papers, aerosol sprays and other flammables away from gas appliances.

**DO** make sure the vent hood, pipes and flues on your gas appliances aren't blocked, cracked or corroded.

**DO** have GFCI outlets and waterproof covers on all outdoor outlets.

**DO** look out for overhead power lines every time you use a ladder or pole. Stay at least 10 feet away from any electrical lines.

**DO** call a professional for help trimming trees near power lines.

**DO** keep electrical devices and cords away from water.

**DO** keep children and pets away from utility equipment, including meters and transformers.

### The wrong way:

**DON'T** yank electrical cords from the wall - this can damage both the plug and the outlet.

**DON'T** attach a cord to another surface with nails or staples - it can damage the insulation.

**DON'T** use damaged or brittle electrical cords, even if bare wires aren't visible.

**DON'T** attempt to fix an electrical appliance or tool while the unit is plugged in.

**DON'T** plug one extension cord into another.

**DON'T** run cords under furniture - it can damage the insulating cover.

**DON'T** store or stack boxes, laundry or other materials around the base of a gas appliance.

**DON'T** let kids play on or around gas equipment, including meters and pipes.

**DON'T** wear long sleeves around a gas stove, and keep towels and potholders away from the open flame.

**DON'T** try to use a gas oven or range to heat a room.

**DON'T** assume the black coating on wires is insulation - it could be just plastic weatherproofing that provides no protection from contact injuries.

**DON'T** let kids climb trees or fly kites near power lines.

**DON'T** disguise transformers or meters with paint or bushes - a utility worker might need to work safely around it or find it quickly in an emergency.

**DON'T** hang signs on utility poles. Nail, staples or tacks can pose a big danger to workers who must climb the poles.

**DON'T** tamper with an electric meter (it's dangerous and illegal), and keep it free of ice and snow during the winter.



# GET READY!

## BLACKOUTS

Severe weather and storms can cause power outages and restoring power can take time. In some instances, such as during extended periods of hot weather, power companies may schedule periods of power outages to help conserve power across the board.

### Before

- Conserve energy to help reduce the threat of a power outage.
- Have flashlights, a battery-powered or hand-cranked radio, and extra batteries on hand.
- Set aside extra water and buy or make extra ice.
- If you have space in your refrigerator or freezer, keep plastic containers filled with water, leaving about an inch of space in each one. The chilled or frozen water will help keep food cool during power outages.
- Be prepared to cook outside.
- If you take any medications that must be refrigerated, check with your doctor or pharmacist to determine how long medications can last.
- Back up computer files regularly.
- Have some form of phone that does not require electricity, either a standard telephone or a cellular phone, rather than a cordless telephone.
- Keep your vehicle's gas tank at least half full.
- If you have any specific needs or disabilities that require electrical equipment, make plans for dealing with a power outage.

### During

- Never use candles for emergency lighting, use flashlights.
- Turn off any electrical equipment you were using when the power went out. Leave one light on so you know when the power returns.
- Avoid opening the refrigerator and freezer.
- Use generators safely. Don't run a generator inside a home or garage. Connect the equipment you want to run directly to the generator. Do not connect a generator to a home's electrical system. Keep instructions with the generator and be familiar with its use.
- Use the telephone only for emergencies.
- Listen to the radio for updates.
- Eliminate unnecessary travel.
- If it is hot outside, take steps to remain cool. If it is cold, take steps to remain warm.



- If you are in your car when a power line falls on it, stay in the vehicle and do not touch anything on the outside of the vehicle. Use your horn or cell phone to signal for help.
- Short-term power outages usually occur during peak energy usage times, usually between 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. on weekdays, and typically last one hour.

### After

- Stay away from downed power lines.
- Do not refreeze any dairy products, seafood, or food that has thawed completely and been above 40° for more than two hours, or anything with a questionable texture or smell. If in doubt, throw it out.

# What Should Be Discarded After A Power Outage?



As soon as the power returns, **check temperatures**. If the food in the freezer has ice crystals and is not above 40 degrees you can refreeze. Perishable foods in the refrigerator should not be above **40 degrees F** for more than two hours. **Use this chart** to see what has to be discarded and what can be kept.

Frozen Foods	Still Contains Ice Crystals. Not Above 40° F	Thawed, Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours
<b>Meat and Mixed Dishes:</b>		
Beef, veal, lamb, pork, poultry, ground meat and poultry	REFREEZE	DISCARD
Casseroles with meat, pasta, rice, egg or cheese base, stews, soups, convenience foods, pizza	REFREEZE	DISCARD
Fish, shellfish, breaded seafood products	REFREEZE. MAY BE SOME TEXTURE & FLAVOR LOSS	DISCARD
<b>Dairy:</b>		
Milk	REFREEZE. MAY LOSE SOME QUALITY	DISCARD
Eggs (out of shell) egg products	REFREEZE	DISCARD
Ice cream, frozen yogurt	DISCARD	DISCARD
Cheese (soft and semi soft) cream cheese ricotta	REFREEZE. MAY LOSE SOME TEXTURE	DISCARD
Hard cheese (cheddar Swiss parmesan)	REFREEZE	REFREEZE
<b>Fruits and Vegetables:</b>		
Fruit Juices	REFREEZE	REFREEZE. DISCARD IF MOLD, YEASTY SMELL OR SLIMINESS DEVELOPS.
Home or commercially packaged fruit	REFREEZE. WILL CHANGE TEXTURE & FLAVOR	REFREEZE. DISCARD IF MOLD, YEASTY SMELL OR SLIMINESS DEVELOPS.
Vegetable Juices	REFREEZE	DISCARD IF ABOVE 50° F FOR OVER 8 HOURS
Home or commercially packaged or blanched vegetables	REFREEZE. WILL CHANGE TEXTURE & FLAVOR	DISCARD IF ABOVE 50° F FOR OVER 8 HOURS
<b>Baked Goods Baking Ingredients:</b>		
Flour, cornmeal, nuts	REFREEZE	REFREEZE
Pie Crusts, Breads, rolls, muffins, cakes (no custard fillings)	REFREEZE	REFREEZE
Cakes, pies, pastries with custard or cheese filling, cheesecake	REFREEZE	DISCARD
Commercial and homemade bread dough	REFREEZE. MAY LOSE SOME QUALITY	REFREEZE. CONSIDERABLE QUALITY LOSS
<b>Refrigerator Foods</b>	<b>Food Still Cold, Held At 40° F Or Above Under 2 Hours</b>	<b>Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours</b>
<b>Dairy/Eggs/Cheese:</b>		
Milk, cream, sour cream buttermilk evaporated milk yogurt	KEEP	DISCARD
Butter, margarine	KEEP	KEEP
Baby Formula, opened	KEEP	DISCARD
Eggs, egg dishes, custards puddings	KEEP	DISCARD
Hard & processed cheeses	KEEP	KEEP
Soft cheeses, cottage cheese	KEEP	DISCARD
<b>Fruits &amp; Vegetables:</b>		
Fruit juices, opened: Canned fruits opened Fresh fruits	KEEP	KEEP
Vegetables, cooked; Vegetable luice opened	KEEP	DISCARD AFTER 6 HOURS
Baked potatoes	KEEP	DISCARD
Fresh mushrooms, herbs spices	KEEP	KEEP
Garlic, chopped in oil or buffer	KEEP	DISCARD
<b>Meat, Poultry, Seafood:</b>		
Fresh or leftover meat, poultry, fish, or seafood	KEEP	DISCARD
Lunchmeats, hot dogs, bacon, sausage, dried beef	KEEP	DISCARD
Canned meats (NOT labeled "Keep Refrigerated" but refrigerated after opening)	KEEP	DISCARD
Canned hams labeled " Keep Refrigerated"	KEEP	DISCARD
<b>Mixed Dishes, Side Dishes:</b>		
Casseroles soups stews pizza with meat	KEEP	DISCARD
Meat tuna shrimp chicken egg salad	KEEP	DISCARD
Cooked pasta Pasta salads with mayonnaise or vinegar base	KEEP	DISCARD
Gravy stuffing	KEEP	DISCARD
<b>Pies, Breads:</b>		
Cream or cheese filled pastries and pies	KEEP	DISCARD
Fruit pies	KEEP	KEEP
Breads, rolls, cakes, muffins, quick breads	KEEP	KEEP
Refrigerator biscuits, rolls, cookie dough	KEEP	DISCARD
<b>Sauces, Spreads, Jams:</b>		
Mayonnaise, tartar sauce, horseradish	KEEP	DISCARD IF ABOVE 50° F FOR OVER 8 HOURS
Opened salad dressing, jelly, relish, taco and barbeque sauce, mustard, catsup olives	KEEP	KEEP