



Oneida County Emergency Services

Citizen Preparedness

Power Outage Safety Tips*

BE PREPARED!

At home or at work, keep a battery-operated radio and flashlight on hand, as well as a supply of batteries.

Keep an emergency supply of water, medications, and non-perishable foods handy. If you use medication that requires refrigeration, most can be kept in a closed refrigerator for several hours without a problem-check with your physician or pharmacist.

If you have space in your refrigerator or freezer, consider filling plastic containers with water, leaving an inch of space inside each one -this will help keep food cold if the power goes out.

Have a list of emergency numbers readily available. Keep your vehicle gas tank at least half-full.

Plan to have an alternative-cooking source, such as a camp stove or outdoor grill.

Follow appropriate safety rules for its use outside the residence.

Consider buying a generator and follow the rules for using it outside the residence.

Before installing a generator, be sure to properly disconnect from your utility electrical service. If possible, have your generator installed by a qualified electrician.

Have extra blankets, coats, hats, and gloves on hand to keep warm.

If you have a computer, back up files and operating systems regularly. Turn off all computers, monitors, and other devices when they are not being used.

If you have an electric garage door opener, locate the manual release level and learn how to operate.

If you have a telephone instrument or system that requires electricity to work, plan for alternate communication such as a standard telephone handset, cellular telephone, or radio.

DURING AN OUTAGE

Listen to local broadcasts for official information.

Turn off major appliances to prevent damage from a possible surge when the power comes back on - keep one light turned on, so you know when power returns.

Call your utility provider to notify them of the outage.

Check to see if your neighbors have power.

Check on people with special needs.

Use only flashlights for emergency lighting – candles pose the risk of fire

Keep your refrigerator and freezer doors shut to keep food from spoiling.

When in doubt, throw it out!

Do not use a charcoal grill indoors and do not use a gas stove for heat - they could give off harmful levels of carbon monoxide.

In cold weather, stay warm by dressing in layers and minimizing time spent outdoors. Be aware of cold stress symptoms (i.e., hypothermia) and seek proper medical attention if symptoms appear.

In hot weather, take steps to remain cool. Move to the lowest level of the house. Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing. Drink plenty of water.

If you are in a tall building, take the stairs and move to the lowest level of the building.

If trapped in an elevator, wait for assistance. Do not attempt to force the doors open. Remain patient - there is plenty of air and the interior of the elevator is designed for passenger safety.

Remember to provide fresh, cool water for your pets.

Eliminate unnecessary travel, especially by car.

Traffic signals will stop working during an outage, creating traffic congestion and dangerous driving conditions. If you must drive during a blackout, remember to obey the 4-Way Stop rule at intersections with non-functioning traffic signals.

Remember that equipment such as automated teller machines (ATMS) and elevators may not be working.

Call your local emergency response number for help, if needed.

PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

If someone you know is elderly or dependent on life-sustaining or health-related equipment (i.e., ventilators, respirators, oxygen concentrators, or enhancers), help plan to make sure their needs are met by taking the following actions:

Register them as a special needs customer with their utility so they will become a priority customer.

Notify others that could provide help such as fire department, neighbors, nearby friends, or relatives.

Have a list of emergency numbers readily available.

Have a standby generator or an alternative source of power available. Be aware of the safety rules for its use.

[*Source: NYS Emergency Management Office]