

For Immediate Release

Wayne Holmes Emergency Coalition
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ARE YOU PREPARED FOR A POWER OUTAGE?

We have all had power outages at our homes in the last few years. Were you prepared to deal with this situation?

The Wayne-Holmes Emergency Coalition wants to help you be ready the next time a local disaster strikes. This column will be published once a month with information about how to prepare for disasters--large or small. We will spotlight topics and answer questions. Your safety and the safety of the entire county relies on how well prepared we are to respond once a disaster occurs. We hope you find the information helpful. **Today's topic: Power outages.**

Q. How can I prepare before a power outage happens?

- A.** Gather essential supplies, including:
- Flashlights
 - Batteries
 - Portable Radio
 - A wind-up or battery powered clock
 - Water (1 gallon per person per day) and non-perishable food
 - Manual can opener
 - First Aid Kit

Due to the extreme risk of fire, DO NOT use candles during a power outage.

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 unsure.

If you have an electric garage door opener, know how to use the manual release lever. Be sure to keep a key to your house with you in case you need it.

Cordless phones require electricity to work. One should have a cell phone, standard telephone handset, or pager for communication.

Q. What should I do during a power outage?

- A.** Turn off or disconnect any appliances, equipment like air conditioners, and computers you were using when the power went off.
Leave one light on so you'll know when the power returns.
Do not call 9-1-1. Listen to radio stations in your area for updates.
Call your power company to report the power outage.
Remember to give pets plenty of fresh, cool water.

Q: If the power goes out, how long will my refrigerator and freezer keep items fresh/frozen?

A: Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to maintain the cold temperature. The refrigerator will keep food safely cold for about 2-4 hours if it is unopened. Always keep meat, poultry, fish, and eggs refrigerated at or below 40 °F. Digital, dial, or instant-read food thermometers and appliance thermometers will help you know if the food is at safe temperatures.

In case of an outage or equipment failure, it is helpful to know the temperature of thawed food. The following tip will let you be prepared.

Place two or three ice cubes in a plastic freezer bag, seal, and keep in the freezer at all times. If there is a power outage, you will know if the interior temperature was above 32° F. If the ice cubes melt, have a thermometer on hand to determine the temperature of the water in the bag and you will know the temperature inside the freezer.

If it looks like the power outage will be for more than 2-4 hours, pack refrigerated milk, dairy products, meats, fish, poultry, eggs, gravy, stuffing, and leftovers into a cooler surrounded by ice.

Q: Should I get a generator to help when the power goes out?

A: Generators are available in permanent and portable models and are very useful during a power outage. They can also be extremely dangerous if not used correctly. Safety, when using a generator, is extremely important! Carefully follow the manufacturer's instructions. Improper installation can damage the unit, cause a fire or carbon monoxide poisoning, and electrocute residents or power company workers.

Q: What should I know about generator safety?

A: Never: Plug the generator into a wall outlet
Use a generator indoors, in an attached garage, or near a window
Store fuel indoors or refuel a generator when it is running. Turn it off, and let it cool first
Operate more equipment and appliances than the output rating of the generator
Pull your electric meter

Always: Get permits and inspections
Properly connect your generator so it is isolated from your power company's distribution system
Use your generator in a properly ventilated area
Check cords for signs of damage, and replace if necessary.
Turn off equipment powered by the generator before shutting down generator
Keep children away from generators at all times.

Remember, your life and the life of others depends on proper installation and use of a generator.