

# Electrical Outages & Home Safety

## PREPAREDNESS



### IF THE POWER GOES OUT:

- **Check your fuse or breaker box** for blown fuses or tripped circuits. If they are okay, see if neighbors are without power.
- **Call your utility** immediately. You may be asked for information, or hear a message if the situation has already been reported. 9-1-1 is for reporting emergencies **ONLY**.
- **Turn off** all electrical equipment to prevent overloading the system when power is restored.
- **Turn on** a porch light and one inside light so you and utility crews will know when service is restored.
- **Listen to the radio** (battery-powered) for updates on major electrical outages.
- If your neighbors' power comes back on, but yours does not, call your utility company again.

### Important Information when Reporting a Power Outage

- Name, address and cross street
- Time of outage
- Are lights out, flickering or dim?
- Are the neighbors' lights out?
- Have any wires fallen to the ground?
- Tree limbs on lines?
- Utility pole number?

### EMERGENCY LIGHTING:

**Flashlights:** Each person should have their own flashlight. Store extra bulbs and batteries.

**Light-sticks:** Self-contained chemical lights that are activated by bending. Work well as night-lights for children.

**Candles:** Can be dangerous

### DOWNED UTILITY LINES

If you see any wire lying on the ground (or dangling in the air) don't touch it with anything - stay back. Call your utility company immediately. Keep kids and pets away.

NEVER touch a downed wire. Electricity can travel through your body causing serious injury or death. If you see a downed line take these precautions:

Expect every wire/line to be "live". The line does not have to spark or sizzle to carry electricity. Cable, phone and alarm lines may be ELECTRIFIED. Do not touch.

If a power line is touching someone stay away - you cannot help. If you touch the person, you could become a victim too.

Call 9-1-1 for emergency help.

If a utility line falls across your vehicle, don't get out! Wait for emergency help to arrive.

Never touch metal (like fences or guard rails) that have a wire laying on it. It may be electrified.

### Emergency Kit Check list

- ✓ Flashlights or chemical light-sticks
- ✓ Battery-powered radio
- ✓ Paper plates/ plastic utensils
- ✓ Manual can opener
- ✓ Bottled drinking water
- ✓ First aid kit
- ✓ Extra batteries
- ✓ Battery or wind-up alarm clock

### STAYING WARM:

Outages can occur at any time of year, but during cold weather the temperature inside your home can drop rapidly. Tips for staying warm:

**Save Body Heat** - Wear a hat, even while sleeping. Wear loose layers of clothing to trap body heat. Use blankets.

**Lock in Home Heat** - Pick one room (on a sunny side of the house) and close it off to keep the heat in.

### Who to call to report a power outage in Bergen County:

PSE & G ..... 800-436-7734  
Rockland Electric ..... 877-434-4100

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Remember: Utility crews may have to remove limbs, replace parts, close circuit breakers. The more serious the problem, the longer it will take to restore customer service

### HOUSEHOLD TIPS:

Your **Freezer** will keep food frozen during an outage for about two days if it's full; one day if it's less than half-full. Don't open the door.

**Protect your pipes:** If the power is out and the weather is freezing, keep a steady drip of cold water on an inside faucet and wrap pipes to prevent damage.

**Automatic Garage Door Openers** won't work if the power is out. Check to see if you have a manual override.

**Home Computers:** Install a surge protector (not just a power strip) to protect your computer from power surges.

**Charcoal or propane grills:** NEVER use a cooking device designed for outdoors inside the home. They produce carbon monoxide which can be deadly.

**Cordless phones** won't work if the power is out. Have a backup phone that does not need electricity to work.

**Generators:** Never connect a home generator to a wall outlet. If used incorrectly, portable or auxiliary generators used for backup power at home can ruin your electrical system and start a fire. They can also feed electricity back into the utility system. This is very dangerous for crews repairing lines.

Home generators should be installed by a licensed electrical contractor. Generators installed in accordance with electrical safety codes, require an electrical permit and an electrical inspection.

Improperly installed or improperly used generators pose a serious - sometimes fatal - risk to homeowners and utility workers.

Bergen County Office of Emergency Management  
201-634-3100 or [www.bcoem.org](http://www.bcoem.org)

