

FREE GUIDE • POWER

Power Outage Family Plan

What to do before, during and after the lights go out, written down as your own plan.

Hey, I'm Randall. I'm a former Marine Combat Engineer, and my wife, Robbie, is a registered nurse. Many families have never written down what they will do when the power drops. This is the page for that. Fill it in over four weeks or one evening. Pencil is fine.

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Before: What in Our House Runs on Power?

Ready.gov says to take an inventory of everything you need that relies on electricity, then plan batteries or another power source for each, have a flashlight for every household member, and find out whether your home phone works without power and for how long. [S1]

What Needs Power (fridge, CPAP, Phone, Well Pump...):	Why It Matters:	Backup Plan:	Charged And Tested? (Y/N):

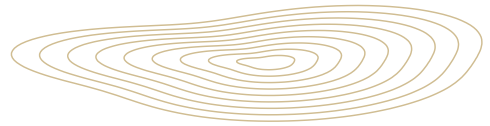
Quick Checks

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ One flashlight for every person | ☐ I know if our home phone works without power |
| ☐ Battery-backup CO alarm on every level | ☐ Smoke alarms tested this month |
| ☐ Thermometer in the fridge and freezer | ☐ Two weeks of food and water on hand |
| ☐ Car gas tank at least half full | ☐ Signed up for local outage alerts |

CO Alarm Install Date:

Electric Company Outage Phone Number:



**STEP 2**

Medical Needs and Your Support Network

Ready.gov says to talk with your medical provider about an outage plan for any medical device that runs on electricity and for any medicine that needs the fridge. Ask how long each medicine can be stored at higher temperatures, and get specific guidance for any medicine that is critical for life.

Write the provider's name and number on the printable so nobody has to hunt for it in the dark.

Medicine and devices

Ask your doctor or pharmacist about your household's medicines.

Ready.gov says that if power is out more than a day, refrigerated medicine should be discarded unless its label says otherwise, and to consult your doctor or pharmacist right away for a new supply.

Worksheet B: Medical Device and Medicine Plan

Who:	Device Or Medicine:	Battery Backup Hours (from Maker):	Backup Power Source:	How Long Warm? (ask Provider):	Provider Name And Phone:
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Where We Go If A Device Needs Power:

Date We Talked With The Provider:

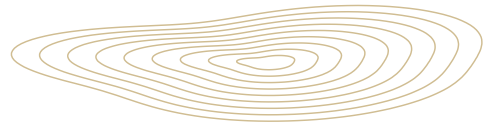
Worksheet C: Support Network

The Red Cross says to list people who can help you stay or leave, and to keep a paper copy of the list.

Name:	Phone:	Who They Are To Us:	Can Help With (ride, Place To Stay, Check-in, Charging):
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

☐ I printed a paper copy of this list





STEP 3

During: Stay Safe and Keep Food Cold

Carbon monoxide: the one that kills without warning

The CDC calls carbon monoxide an odorless, colorless gas that kills without warning.

The CDC lists headache, dizziness, weakness, upset stomach, vomiting, chest pain and confusion as signs of carbon monoxide poisoning. People who are asleep can die before they have symptoms.

Generators, camp stoves and charcoal grills must never run inside the house, garage, basement or crawlspace, even with doors open. Run a generator outdoors, more than 20 feet from windows, doors and vents. Never heat the house with a gas stove or oven. [S1][S3][S4]

If the CO alarm sounds, get everyone outside right away. Then call 911.

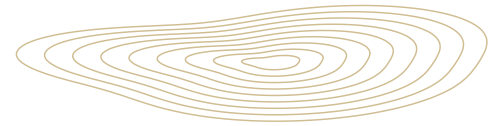
Never plug a generator into a wall outlet (backfeeding). It can electrocute utility workers, neighbors and your own household. Only an electrician should install a transfer switch. [S4]

- Use flashlights, not candles. [S2]
- Unplug appliances and electronics so a surge does not damage them when power returns. [S1][S2]
- Keep the fridge and freezer doors closed. If the doors stay closed, the CDC says food stays safe up to 4 hours in a refrigerator, 48 hours in a full freezer and 24 hours in a half-full freezer. [S5]
- At 4 hours, if you have a cooler and ice, move refrigerated perishables into it. Food is only as safe as its temperature: 40 degrees F or below. [S5]
- Stay or go: the Red Cross says to evacuate if the home is too hot or too cold, or if medical devices need power. Check for local warming or cooling centers. [S2]

Worksheet D: Outage Log (fill it in as it happens)

Power Out At (time):	Fridge Safe Until (add 4 Hrs):	Freezer: Full Or Half? Safe Until (add 48 Or 24 Hrs):	Moved To Cooler At:	Thermometer Readings:
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Who I Checked On:		Stay Or Go, And Why:		Power Back At:
_____		_____		_____





STEP 4

After: Power Is Back

- **When in doubt, throw it out.** Never taste food to test it. Throw out perishable food from the refrigerator after 4 hours without power or a cold source, food at 40 degrees F or higher for 2 hours or more, and anything with an unusual smell, color or texture. [S1][S5]
- Thawed frozen food that still has ice crystals or is at 40 degrees F or below can be refrozen or cooked. [S5]
- Stay at least 35 feet away from fallen power lines and anything they touch. Call 911. [S2]
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist about your household's medicines.
- Anything that may have been underwater or any tripped breakers: have a qualified electrician check them before you use them. Only a qualified professional should turn your gas line back on. [S2]

Fix the List

What Worked, And What We Would Do Differently:

Restock List (batteries, Ice, Water, Fuel):

Next Review Date (once A Year, Or After Any Outage):

Sources

Sources for the Quick Checks on page 1: the Red Cross says to keep at least two weeks of non-perishable food and water, test smoke alarms monthly and keep the car gas tank at least half full. Ready.gov says to put battery-backup CO alarms on every level. The CDC says to put battery-operated or battery backup CO detectors near every sleeping area and to replace a detector per the maker's instructions or every 5 years. [S1][S2][S3]

[S1] Ready.gov (FEMA): Power Outages. Read 10/11/2026.

[S2] American Red Cross: Power Outage Safety. Read 10/11/2026.

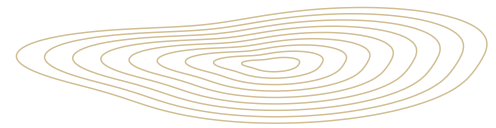
[S3] CDC: Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Basics (reviewed Jan. 12, 2026). Read 10/10/2026.

[S4] American Red Cross: Generator Safety. Read 10/10/2026.

[S5] CDC: Keep Food Safe After a Disaster or Emergency (Nov. 24, 2025). Read 10/11/2026.

General preparedness information, not medical advice. Follow your doctor, your device maker and your utility.





STEP 5

Backup Power Sizing Sheet

Size backup power to your own list, not to the ad. Circle only what you truly need to run from Worksheet A: lights, phones, a radio, maybe the fridge for part of the day. Find each item's watts on its label or in its manual.

Item:	Watts (from The Label):	Runs At The Same Time? (Y/N):	Hours A Day:	Watt-hours (watts X Hours):

Total Watts Running At The Same Time:

Total Watt-hours A Day:

- **Output:** the station's output rating has to be higher than your total watts running at the same time.
- **Storage:** compare your total watt-hours to the station's usable watt-hours, not the number on the box. Batteries lose some power, and it is smart to stop before empty. Use the maker's own run-time calculator.
- **Limits:** a family-size station will not run central air, an electric range or a whole house. Save it for the small jobs that matter most.

Station We Chose And Its Usable Watt-hours:

Last Full Charge (date):

Gear for This Plan: Our Picks

- **Light for every person:** Black Diamond Spot 400 or Astro 300 headlamp.
- **News and weather:** Midland ER310 NOAA weather radio (rechargeable battery, hand crank, solar top-up).
- **Phone power:** Anker Nano Power Bank 10,000 mAh 30W.
- **Backup power station:** Jackery Explorer 1000 v2 or EcoFlow DELTA 3 Classic (1024Wh).
- **Still on the list, no pick yet:** a battery-backup CO alarm for each level, an appliance thermometer for the fridge and freezer, and a good cooler.

Read more on our site • The picks, with the tradeoffs:

Power Outage Family Plan: Gear for This Plan

Read more on our site • Backup power, sized for your house:

Family-Scale Backup Power: Solar Generator Buyer's Guide

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