

# Some basic things to remember when there's a power outage

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## EXTRACT

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## ARTICLE CONTENT

During any given storm, it's anyone's guess who loses their electricity. A variety of factors go into this occurrence, such as the utility company a homeowner uses and how severe a certain storm is in any given area.

And as inconvenient as these blackouts can be, odds are that virtually every homeowner has experienced at least one of them, which can often last for a number of days in severe cases. For example, after Hurricane Sandy, hundreds of homeowners up and down the Northeast were out of power for more than two days.

Fortunately, being prepared for these outages can make them a bit more tolerable to deal with.

The following tips should be helpful for homeowners so that they can ready themselves for when the electricity goes out.

Perhaps the best thing to have on hand is plenty of equipment that can help homeowners find their way around the house. For example, there should be plenty of battery-powered flashlights so that each member of the family has at least one. These are useful without power, so they should also be equipped with some spare batteries should flashlights need to be used for a lengthy period of time.

It's also smart to have a battery-powered radio, as local media may have information on how widespread the outage is and how long it may last.

Other helpful items to have on hand are candles, matches and some candle holders so they can be placed around the house.

### **Unplug appliances**

During the outage itself, the lights can come back on at any time. However, it's a good idea to unplug many of the appliances that require electricity when nothing is working. That's because when the electricity returns, it sometime causes a surge, which can fry electronic devices if they're still plugged into outlets. Far better to unplug these items - especially computers - to ensure that electronic devices aren't damaged in the event of an electrical surge.

Another issue to take into consideration when the lights go out is food. Of course, the refrigerator runs on electricity, so the food that's within can spoil if the power is out for an extended amount of time. If at all possible, try to keep the fridge door closed so that the cold air stays within. In addition, prior to the arrival of a severe storm, turn the temperature

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down in your refrigerator. The colder the appliance is before losing power, the longer the items inside will keep from spoiling.

Depending on the type of food - such as dairy and meats - they may need to be thrown out if the electricity is off for more than several hours. However, homeowners may be able to be compensated for these losses through their rural insurance provider. Depending on the policy and the coverage, insurers will often reimburse policyholders so that they can replace food items that have gone bad.

