

**TO REPORT AN OUTAGE DURING
NORMAL BUSINESS HOURS,**

CALL 215-536-5001

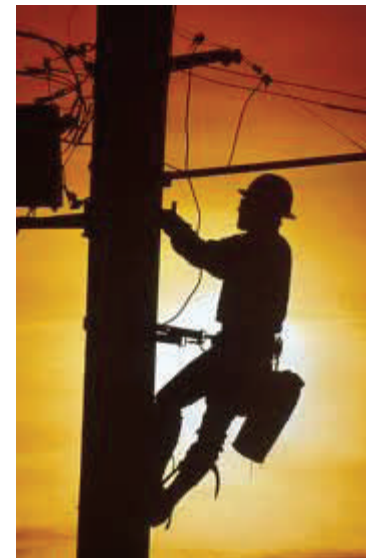
Borough of Quakertown

Business Hours:

M-F 8:30 am to 5:00 pm

**TO REPORT AN OUTAGE AFTER
NORMAL BUSINESS HOURS,**

CALL 215-721-3520



What to do Before and After the Power Goes Off

Preparing for that unlikely outage.

Practical tips from
Quakertown Electric Department

Electric service is extremely reliable. Power outages don't happen often and usually don't last long. However, it helps to know what to do when they happen. By taking the right steps you can lessen the inconvenience and discomfort for yourself and your family.

There are several reasons for the occasional power failure. It can be something as minor as lightning striking the lines, a tree falling across wires, or a car crashing into a power pole. But sometimes the problem is more severe, causing widespread power outages that can last from hours to days.

The outage can be caused by severe thunderstorms or tornadoes that snap power poles and tangle lines. The most troublesome causes are snow and ice. A blizzard or an ice storm can cause damage that is widespread and difficult to repair. These outages are the most serious because they can leave your home and family vulnerable to the freezing cold for many days.

Whatever the cause, you and your family can better cope with an emergency if you know what to do. This booklet was prepared to give you helpful advice on ways to lessen the inconvenience of a power failure.

Keep this booklet in a handy spot so you can find it quickly.

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Heat Pumps: In winter, don't reset the thermostat to the "ON" position as soon as the power comes back on because the electric heat pump performs its job by circulating a refrigerant gas.

When the power has been off for a while, the unit's refrigerant cools and changes to a liquid, which tends to collect in the compressor. If the unit is put into operation in this state, possible mechanical damage can result.

Follow this rule after a power outage in the winter: If the power has been off more than three hours, place the system switch in the emergency heat position. This will quickly bring your home to a normal temperature. Leave the switch in the emergency heat position for 24 hours.

At the end of 24 hours, set the thermostat for heat pump operation. This will restart your unit in the heat pump mode.

Sometimes because of a power outage, you may have breakers that have tripped leaving you still without power. If you see that your neighbors have power and believe you should as well, please check your breakers to make sure they are closed prior to calling the electric department.

- Refrigerator: Keep it and the freezer closed as much as possible. If thawing begins, put in dry or wet ice if you can get it. A picnic cooler is handy to store ice and food for short periods of time.
- Cooking It can be done in the fireplace, over the barbecue grill, or on the camping stove. Use the grill and stove outdoors to avoid danger of toxic fumes and possible fire.

When the Power is Back On

Congratulations, you made it! Coming through an emergency gives us all a sense of satisfaction. More than that, most of us have had the wonderful experience of seeing friends, neighbors, even strangers come together to help in any way they can. We also discover what a powerful force for comfort and convenience that electricity is in our everyday lives. It is so nice to have it back, isn't it?

Appliances: You will be anxious to get appliances up and running, but take it easy. If everybody switched on the air conditioning or heating systems at once, the power lines could be overloaded, causing another outage. Start only the appliances you absolutely must have on. Refrigerators, freezers, electric hot water heaters and items like this will automatically come on. If the power has been out for an extended period of time, go through your house to verify that items that should be off are off.

Be Prepared

After the power goes off is no time to discover that the flashlight batteries are dead and that there isn't a candle in the house. If you plan ahead, you will be ready for an emergency. A few simple steps, taken now, can make the power outage far less trying for you and your family.

Emergency Kit: Include a battery powered radio, flashlight, a supply of batteries for both, candles, matches, and a can opener.



Food and Water: Enough should be kept on hand for several days (check expiration dates periodically). Plan on a quart of drinking water per person per day. Have on hand a picnic cooler for use later to store perishables.

First-Aid Kit: Include bandages, disinfectant, aspirin, plus a supply of medications that must be taken regularly (check expiration dates periodically).

Baby Supplies: Keep a supply of baby food, canned milk, formula, and disposable diapers on hand, if you have small children.

Backup Heat: Plan alternate methods of heating your home. All fuel should be stored properly in approved safety containers and wood kept in a dry place.

If you heat with natural gas, check to see whether your system requires electricity to operate. If so, plan another way to heat your home in an outage.

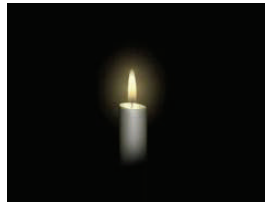
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Fire Prevention: Have handy a UL listed fire extinguisher labeled for class A, B, and C fires, suitable for use on ordinary combustibles, flammable liquids, and electrical fires. Be sure all family members know how to use it.

When the Power Goes off -- Don't Panic.

Remember that people lived without electricity for many years and did quite nicely. If you planned ahead - - put your plan into operation. If you didn't, just follow these simple steps and you will be able to handle the emergency.

In the Dark : If it's nighttime, locate those candles or kerosene lamps and light them. You will be able to see what you're doing, and circumstances will seem less threatening.



Neighbors: Look to see if their lights are off. If not, the problem might be confined to your home.

Telephone: Try it. It may be working because the telephone system is operated on a separate electrical circuit.

Fuses and Breakers: Check them. If they are okay and your telephone is working, call the above emergency number. Give your address and phone number and tell us how long the power has been off.

Keeping Cool

When a power outage occurs during the steamy days of summer, our first thoughts are usually about air-conditioning and refrigeration. The good news is that there are things you can do to be surprisingly comfortable despite the apparent hardships. Many of these methods you already know, and the others are just common sense.

- **Dress Cool:** Wear lightweight, loose-fitting cotton clothing; if you're in the sun, wear light-colored clothing and a protective hat.
- **Draperies:** Keep them closed on the sunny side of the house during the day.
- **Windows:** Open them at nights or on mild days for natural ventilation.
- **Baths:** Take them frequently with tepid water to lower body temperature.
- **Fluids** Drink small amounts of water and fruit juices often.
- **Chores:** Keep strenuous activity to a minimum. If a job doesn't have to be done, don't do it. If you must, do them during the cooler parts of the day.

Portable Generators: Locate the generator in a well ventilated area, preferably outside your home. Gasoline powered generators can produce carbon monoxide, which can be deadly. Plug appliances directly into the generator. Use extension cords if necessary, but do not exceed the recommended wattage noted on the generator.

Never connect the generator to your home's main wiring circuit. Disconnect your home from the power system before hooking up a generator. Failure to do so can cause electricity to flow backwards into the power lines, endangering neighbors and the linemen who are working to restore power.

If in doubt, contact a licensed electrician or Quakertown Borough Electric Department.



Warning: Stay away from downed power lines. Make sure that no one, especially children, goes near them. Even lines that look harmless can be very dangerous. Just note the location and call the Quakertown Electric Department immediately.

Electric Appliances: Turn off all the ones that were on, especially heat pumps, air-conditioners, and electric heating. That will prevent the borough electric system from being overloaded once power is restored. Leave a light on so you'll know when service is back on.



Information: Turn on your battery-operated portable radio and listen for messages from your local utilities. If possible, call your neighbors and find out if they have information about the emergency.

Keeping Warm

Winter outages make keeping warm a problem, but it can be done. The thing to remember is to keep as much heat as is available from getting away. There is residual heat in your home, your body is a natural source of heat, and the sun is a wonderful solar heater. In combination, these can get you through in comparative comfort.

Warm Room: Choose a small, well-insulated room with few windows as your emergency living quarters. Block this room off and put cardboard and blankets over the windows at night to minimize heat loss.

Clothes: Wrap up in warm clothing. Put on several thin layers instead of one or two big bulky garments. Thermal underwear is good. Don't forget to wear a hat. As much as 80% of a person's body heat can be lost without one.

Stay Close: When it is extremely cold, the whole family (pets, too) should group in one room where all drafts have been sealed to benefit from the combined body heat.

Eat Something: The body burns food to produce calories, which keeps you warm. Open those cans of food that need no cooking and make sure everyone eats something. If frozen food starts to thaw in very cold weather put it outside in a shaded spot away from animals.

Bedtime: Layer blankets or quilts over you. Wear plenty of clothes plus a hat. Remember that the human body gives off heat. Sleep with two or three people together under the blankets or in zipped-together sleeping bags.

Sunlight: In the daytime, use the warming rays of the sun to keep you comfortable. Open the draperies to get the warmth into your home.



Heaters and Generators

A backup heating source can be a wonderful solution to keeping warm in winter. There are drawbacks, however. There can be danger involved so it is imperative that you learn how to operate it safely before an emergency occurs and always keep your fire extinguisher handy. The tips that follow are only reminders. Be sure that you follow manufacturers' directions exactly so you can enjoy the benefits without the hazards.

Fireplaces: Never use one without a screen, be sure your chimney is free of the flammable creosote that builds up from wood smoke, handle ashes carefully, and never allow children to play unattended near the fireplace or any other heating source.

Wood / Coal Stoves: More efficient than fireplaces but they must be properly installed and connected to a suitable chimney or flue. Check local building and fire regulations for installation requirements.

Fuel Burning Heaters: Use only as directed and only in areas with proper ventilation. Suffocation can occur when fuel burning heaters are used improperly or in poorly ventilated areas.

