



A consumer's guide to preparing for winter outages

Helpful advice for you to prepare for winter power outages: what to have, what to do, where to go.

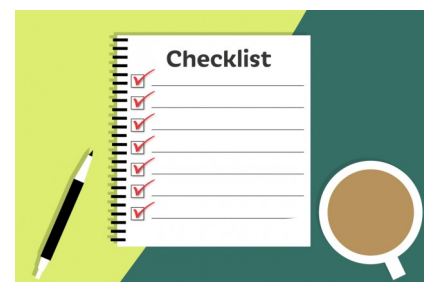
When the power goes out in the winter, will you be prepared? In Vermont, winter storms can take down power lines, causing loss of power to homes and businesses, often for days. If you aren't prepared, you may find yourself without electricity for heat, appliances, phone service, or the ability to charge your devices, leaving you with no means of communication.

You can take steps ahead of time and be prepared to face a winter power outage.

A checklist

The first step is to create a checklist of what to have on hand should the power go out. Here is a helpful list:

- Flashlights/other source of light
- Extra batteries
- Bottled water for drinking and flushing toilets
- Food to last for a few days that doesn't have to be cooked*
- Food and warm bedding for pets
- Battery- or hand-powered radio
- Charge all cell phones/devices prior to the arrival of a storm
- Have an "In case of emergency" contact on all your household cell phones/devices
- An alternate source of power for refrigerating medicines or using power-dependent medical devices



Traditional landline phone service may work during an outage but cordless phones may need electricity to work.

Be familiar with what type of service you have for your landline, traditional or VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol), and prepare accordingly. Having a true traditional landline does not mean your phone will work if the electricity is out.

***DO NOT USE OUTSIDE COOKING GRILLS INSIDE.
THEY CAN GIVE OFF GASSES THAT CAN HARM OR KILL YOU**

What to do if the power goes out

- **ONLY CALL 911 IF THERE IS A MEDICAL EMERGENCY OR A DANGEROUS SITUATION. DO NOT CALL 911 TO REPORT THE POWER IS OUT**
- Report the outage to your electric company; they may not know you have lost power
- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed to keep food cold
- If you have a generator, **run it outside to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning**
- Unplug appliances (TV, microwave, stove/oven, etc.)
- Keep a light or two on so you know when the power comes back on
- If you have to drive, be careful. If traffic lights are out, each intersection is a four-way stop.
- If you see a downed power line, leave it alone. **Always treat power lines as if they are live; a live wire can kill you.**
- **Call 211 if you need to go to a warming station or a place where you can charge your devices**



A battery powered portable generator may be an option for consumers who need to keep medicines refrigerated, or need to keep medical devices powered. This is the only type of generator that may be used safely indoors. It can provide power for three to nine hours (depending on usage) and requires a transfer switch for running hard-wired appliances or machines. The downside is they can be expensive, are heavy, and take several hours to fully charge.

Helpful resources

- [Winter Safety \(VT Emergency Management\)](#)
- [If the Electricity Stops Working \(VT Department of Health\)](#)
- [FCC/FEMA Emergency Communications Tips](#)
- [5 Things to Know About Portable Power Stations \(Consumer Reports\)](#)
- [Be Ready, Plan Ahead \(VT Department of Public Service \)](#)
- [Winter Storms Preparedness Activities \(FEMA\)](#)
- [Winter Storms Preparedness Activities Answer Key \(FEMA\)](#)
- [Winter Weather | Ready.gov](#)
- [Safety Tips \(Green Mountain Power\)](#)

