

Prepare your home for a power outage

This checklist can help you prepare your home for an outage and ensure that you know what to do before, during and after an outage.

Before an outage

Make sure that we have your current phone number by logging into your account profile at bchydro.com, or call us at 1 800 BCHYDRO (1 800 224 9376) or *49376 on your mobile phone. In addition to updating your phone number, check that you've taken the necessary steps to prepare for an outage:

- Develop a preparedness plan and share it with everyone in your home. Visit getprepared.ca for helpful tips on putting together a plan.
- Check emergency equipment periodically (flashlights, radios, generators, etc.) to make sure they're in working order.
- Use surge protectors to protect your electronic devices such as computers, printers, and televisions.
- Develop a list of important local telephone numbers. Include numbers for police, fire, poison control centre and include us to report an outage: 1 800 BCHYDRO (1 800 224 9376) or *49376 on your mobile device.
- Contact your regional health authority if you or someone you know has special needs during an outage (e.g., is dependent upon electronic life-support systems).
- If you rely on life-sustaining equipment, be prepared for an outage by having a power source. If power is out for a long period, it's important to have a back-up plan, such as moving to the home of a family member or friend in an area with power. If this is not an option, plan to go to your local hospital.

During an outage

If you notice an outage, determine whether the outage is limited to your home. If your neighbour's power is still on, check your circuit breaker panel or fuse box. If your neighbour's power is off, contact us. Use these tips to stay safe during a power outage:

- Stay away from downed lines. Never go near or touch a downed or damaged power line. Assume it's live. Stay back at least 10 metres (the length of a bus) and call 911 to report. Don't attempt to remove objects or debris around the power line.
- Turn off all appliances, especially those that generate heat. This helps prevent injury, damage and fire when the power is restored.

Basic emergency kit essentials

Prepare an emergency kit and store it in an easy-to-find location known to everyone in your home. Basic supplies should include:

- Flashlights; avoid using candles as they can be a fire hazard
- Hand-cranked or battery-powered radio and clock
- Extra batteries
- First aid kit, including prescription medicine if needed
- Non-perishable and ready-to-eat foods
- Bottled water: three-day supply (two litres per person per day)
- Manual can opener
- Warm clothing and blankets
- Supplies for those with special needs
- Supplies for your pet
- Extra keys for your house and car
- Cash in small denominations
- Games, cards and books to entertain everyone
- A copy of your preparedness plan

During an outage

- Never use a camp stove, barbecue, or propane or kerosene heaters indoors. A build-up of carbon monoxide gas in closed areas can be deadly.
- Never plug a portable generator into an electrical outlet. This can cause electrical danger to your neighbours and utility workers.
- Turn off all lights except one inside your home and one outside. The inside light lets you know and the outside light lets our crews know when the power is back on.
- Keep the doors of your refrigerator and freezer closed. Use these tips to keep your food as fresh as possible:
 - Deep freezer – cover the freezer with blankets, quilts or sleeping bags to further insulate the freezer and help keep food frozen longer.
 - Refrigerated food – minimize how often you open the refrigerator. Try placing bags of ice in the fridge, or place food on ice in a cooler or ice chest.

After an outage

Give our electrical system a chance to stabilize after an outage. Occasionally, even after your power has come back on, a momentary outage may occur.

- Turn on the most essential appliances first, and wait 10 to 15 minutes before reconnecting the others.
- Check to make sure your refrigerator and freezer are back on. Determine if anything needs to be discarded. If in doubt, throw it out.
- Reset your clocks, automatic timers, and alarms.
- Restock any used supplies from your emergency kit.
- Pull out your emergency kit once a year and make sure it still fits the needs of your household. Check expiry dates for products and replace batteries with fresh ones.

Stay informed

Up-to-date outage information can be found at bchydro.com/outages. If your outage isn't listed, call us at 1 800 BCHYDRO (1 800 224 9376), *49376 on your mobile phone. You can also get updates on our Twitter page at twitter.com/bchydro.