

HOW TO PREPARE FOR A POWER OUTAGE

Through rain, wind, snow, and ice, Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative strives to keep the power on for every home and business in our community. But we still have our share of hurricanes and ice storms, and these weather conditions can cause our customers to lose power.

For information on how to prepare for and what to do during a power outage, please read this brochure.

Although SMECO works as quickly as possible to get the lights back on, there are some steps you can take before, during, and after an outage. The key is being prepared.

PREPARE FOR AN OUTAGE

- Have an alternate source of light: keep flashlights and extra batteries where they can be found easily. Lanterns and candles are **not** recommended because they can cause fires.
- Keep a battery-powered radio with fresh batteries, and stay tuned to local news bulletins and weather reports.
- Keep your automobile's gas tank full.
- Maintain a supply of cash. Credit cards and ATM machines may not work if the power is out.
- Stock emergency food and related items. Ideal choices are nonperishable foods that do not need cooking, such as canned fruit, canned milk, peanut butter, crackers, cereals and cereal bars, canned soup, tuna, and bread. Stocking up on refrigerated or frozen foods may **not** be a good idea if the power goes out.
- Keep a manual can opener handy, along with disposable plates and utensils.
- Keep your gas grill available year-round for cooking during an outage. (*Always use a gas or charcoal grill outside.*)
- Store extra water in clean jugs, bathtubs, laundry tubs, or other containers if you know a storm is on the way.

During an outage, you may flush a toilet, then pour water into the toilet tank (not the bowl) before flushing again. Turn off the water supply to the toilet before flushing. Toilet tanks hold several gallons of water, so plan accordingly. Remember, melted snow or ice can be a source of water during winter outages (*but not for drinking*). During the summer, you may be able to use water from a pool or hot tub.

- Plan an alternate source of heat in the event of a cold-weather crisis. If you have a fireplace or wood stove, keep adequate kindling and firewood on hand. Have extra clothing, blankets, or sleeping bags available.
- Consult a plumber or other home specialist for other steps to take in the event of a prolonged outage. These may include draining water from pipes or other recommendations particular to your home, situation, or appliances. Have instructions on hand from your heat pump manual or a contractor about how to operate your heat pump after a long-term service interruption.
- **If someone in your household depends on electricity to operate a life support system,** plan ahead for alternate sources of power or lodging. SMECO's outage restoration policy is to make repairs that will restore service to the most people in the least amount of time.
- Place your portable generator outside, **never** in the house, garage, attic, crawl space, or basement. Make sure your generator is connected safely; an improperly connected generator can cause serious injury or death. When your power comes back on, turn off and disconnect your generator.
- Keep fresh batteries in your smoke detectors.
- It is helpful to have a corded phone available: cordless phones will **not** work without electricity. If you have a cell phone, you may need an auto adapter to recharge it.
- If you have livestock, you will need a means of obtaining adequate supplies of fresh water. A generator is recommended.

DURING AN OUTAGE

- Turn off all the major appliances in your home, especially the heat pump. This will prevent damage to the appliances once the power is restored. Turn on appliances one at a time so the electric demand does not jump suddenly.
- Make sure the oven and stove are off; this will prevent fires if the power comes back on while you're away. Do not set dishes, towels, or paper on the stove; these may catch on fire if a burner is on when the power comes on.
- Leave the freezer and refrigerator closed so food will stay cold longer.

Never touch downed power lines or attempt to remove trees from power lines. Contact with power lines may result in serious injury or death. Let qualified SMECO crews handle the clearing and repair work. Please report downed power lines to SMECO immediately.

Record your account number here:

**and keep this brochure near your phone
in the event of an outage.**

**To Report Outages, Call:
1-877-74-SMECO (1-877-747-6326)**



**1-888-440-3311
www.smeco.coop**