

Power Failure

University Glen Residents Call Southern California Edison

1-(800) 611-1911 (Power Failure Updates)

How to Stay Safe During a Power Failure

Humankind spent a lot of its history without electricity, so you'd think we'd be fine roughing it for a day or two. Unfortunately, the reality is we're quite dependent on electricity for some very basic needs. Forget the cell phone or the computer -- the safety of our food and water depends on a stable energy supply. Knowing how to stay safe during a power failure is essential in our modern world.

Refrigeration

Frozen and refrigerated food should be fine in any power failure lasting less than two hours. Some precautions may need to be taken if the power failure is expected to last more than two hours.

If the power goes out, a full freezer should still keep food frozen for 48 hours, and a half-full freezer should last 24 hours. These estimates are shortened if the door is opened, and the more the door is opened, the less effective the freezer will be.

Non frozen perishables

Must be kept below 40 degrees Fahrenheit at all times without opening the door, the typical refrigerator should keep food cold for about four hours during a power failure. If the power is anticipated to be out longer than four hours, all eggs, dairy, meat, and fish should be packed into a cooler with ice. A digital, quick-read thermometer can be used to determine if food is cold enough. Discard any food warmer than 40 degrees.

Water Safety

Water purification system may not operate in a power failure. Your local water utility should be able to tell you if water safety will be affected. The American Red Cross suggests the average person requires a gallon of water per day -- half to drink and half for other uses. One and a half gallons will be needed on hot days (see summer tips below).

The best bet is to store bottled water for use in an emergency. If bottled water is not available, tap water can be used if boiled for at least one minute. Using other methods to purify water are

not as effective. Remember, if chemical means are used to purify water, parasitic organisms are probably not removed

Staying Connected

Most cordless phones will not work during a power failure. Regular, landline telephones -- those that use only a phone line and do not require a power cord or batteries -- will continue to operate during most power failures. Cell phones may or may not function properly. Cell phone systems also have a tendency to overload during a power failure because of overuse. Keep at least one regular, old-fashion phone in the house for power failures.

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Burning wood or charcoal for heat or cooking is a major source of carbon monoxide. Diesel or gasoline generators also produce carbon monoxide. Neither of these should be done in a closed shelter. Only burn wood in a proper fireplace or wood stove. Charcoal should never be burned inside the house or garage.

Never use stoves or ovens to heat a home. Carbon monoxide is formed when gas is burned in this manner and could lead to carbon monoxide poisoning.

Power Failures in Summer

Summer storms and high heat can cause a loss of power during the summer months. Without air conditioning, heat illness becomes a real threat. Water consumption will be higher in hot, humid conditions. Expect to drink a gallon of water per day per person during the summer.

The CDC recommends these steps for avoiding heat illness:

- Drink a non-alcoholic glass of fluid every 15 to 20 minutes, at least one gallon each day.
- Wear light-colored, loose-fitting clothing.
- When indoors without air conditioning, open windows -- if outdoor air quality permits -- and use fans.
- Take cool showers or baths.
- If you feel dizzy, weak, or overheated, go to a cool place. Sit or lie down, drink water, and wash your face with cool water. If you don't feel better soon, call 911.
- Work during cooler hours of the day when possible, or distribute the workload evenly throughout the day.
- Look for signs of heat illness in yourself and others, especially those of heat stroke:
 - confusion
 - nausea and vomiting
 - hot, dry skin

- high body temperature (above 103 degrees Fahrenheit)

Additional links about power failures

American Red Cross

http://www.redcross.org/services/prepare/0,1082,0_92_,00.html

Ready.gov

<http://www.ready.gov/america/beinformed/blackout.html>

Food Safety

<http://anrcatalog.ucdavis.edu/pdf/7264.pdf>

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