Your blackout checklist

Start with what your household needs. Check what is ready, then choose three gaps to close this week.

Water, food & everyday essentials

- ☐ Store at least 1 gallon of water per person per day for 3 days. Add more for pets, heat and individual needs. [1]
- ☐ Choose shelf-stable meals your household will actually eat; pack a manual can opener.
- ☐ Set aside hygiene items, trash bags and supplies for infants or pets, where needed.
- ☐ Keep an appliance thermometer in the refrigerator and freezer; have a cooler and ice plan. [3]

Light, charging & reliable information

- ☐ Put flashlights or battery lanterns where everyone can find them; check batteries.
- ☐ Charge power banks and gather the cables your phones and essential devices use.
- ☐ Write down utility outage reporting details and sign up for local emergency alerts.
- ☐ Keep a battery-powered radio and a paper copy of important contacts.

People, pets & a place to go

- ☐ Agree on who checks on children, older relatives, neighbors and pets.
- ☐ Discuss medicine storage and powered medical equipment with the relevant care team.
- ☐ Choose a safe place to go and transport options if staying home becomes unsafe.
- ☐ Keep essential documents and the household plan together in an easy-to-reach place.

Make it yours. People: _____ Pets: _____ Water stored: _____ gallons
Kit location: _____ Next check: _____

When the lights go out

Use this page as a quick reminder. Your household plan and local emergency instructions come first.

The first things to do

- ☐ Check on everyone and note when the outage began: _____
- ☐ Check utility updates and local alerts using the contact details saved in your plan.
- ☐ Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed; use the food-safety reminders below. [3]
- ☐ Conserve phone power and agree on when to check in again.
- ☐ Follow your relocation plan if temperature, medical needs or other conditions make home unsafe. [2]

Food safety. An unopened refrigerator keeps food cold for about 4 hours. An unopened full freezer holds its temperature for about 48 hours; a half-full one for about 24 hours. Use time and temperature to assess safety. Never taste food to decide whether it is safe. [3]

Generator safety. Operate portable fuel-powered generators outdoors, at least 20 feet from doors, windows and vents, with exhaust directed away. Never run one in a home or garage, even with doors open. Use battery-backed carbon monoxide alarms. Never use a gas oven to heat your home. [2]

After power returns

- ☐ Check food temperatures and follow food-safety guidance before keeping perishables.
- ☐ Recharge supplies, replace used items and record what your plan was missing.

Three things to improve before the next outage:

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Safety references - checked November 7, 2026. Follow local emergency instructions.

[1] CDC: Creating an emergency water supply

[2] CDC: Protect yourself during a power outage

[3] FDA: Food and water safety during power outages