

# Power Outages



Severe weather storms in Cowlitz County often come in the form of a wind or snowstorm. The most common situation which can result is the loss of electricity. Power outages can cause a number of safety concerns.

## **Before a Power Outage**

- 💡 Make sure your disaster preparedness kit contains flashlights, extra batteries, a battery powered radio and a wind up clock.
- 💡 Have a corded telephone available. Cordless phones will not work when the power is out.
- 💡 Register life-sustaining and medical equipment with your utility company.
- 💡 Consider buying a generator.
- 💡 Have an alternative heat source and supply of fuel.
- 💡 If you own an electric garage door opener, know how to open the door without power.



## **During a Power Outage**

- 💡 Turn off lights and electrical appliances except for the refrigerator and freezer.
- 💡 Unplug computers and other sensitive equipment to protect them from possible surges when the power is restored.
- 💡 Leave one lamp on so that you will know when power is restored. Wait at least 15 minutes after power is restored before turning on other appliances.
- 💡 Conserve water, especially if you are on a well.
- 💡 **Never** use gas ovens, gas ranges, barbeques or portable or propane heaters for indoor heating. They use oxygen and create carbon monoxide that can cause suffocation.
- 💡 Candles can become a fire hazard. It is far safer to use flashlights or light sticks for lighting.
- 💡 Stay away from downed power lines and sagging trees with broken limbs.

## **Generator Safety**

- **Never** run a generator inside your home or garage. Deadly carbon monoxide fumes can build up.
- **Never** try to power house wiring by plugging the generator into a wall outlet. It can lead to electrocution of utility workers or neighbors served by the same utility transformer.
- Check out "Home Generator Safety" information on our website.

## **Keeping Food Safe**

- 💡 Use foods first that can spoil most rapidly.
- 💡 Open refrigerator and freezer doors as little as possible.
- 💡 Make sure you own a large ice chest that can be packed with ice or snow to save refrigerator foods.
- 💡 Use extreme caution if storing food outside during the winter to keep it cold. The outside temperatures vary, especially in the sun. Frozen foods may thaw and refrigerated foods may become warm enough to grow bacteria. Food stored outside must be secured from contamination by animals.
- 💡 **If in doubt, throw it out.** Throw out meat, seafood, dairy products and cooked food that does not feel cold.
- 💡 Never taste suspect food. Even if food looks and smells fine, illness-causing bacteria may be present.

