

# POWER OUTAGES—BE PREPARED

Extended power outages may impact the whole community and the economy. A power outage is when electricity service goes out unexpectedly, potentially for hours or days. A power outage may:

- Disrupt communications, water, and transportation.
- Prevent use of medical devices.
- Close retail businesses, grocery stores, gas stations, ATMs, banks, and other critical services.
- Cause food spoilage and water contamination.

## Planned Power Outages

With periods of extreme heat becoming more common in California, power companies may find it necessary to implement planned power outages to avoid overloading the state's electrical grid. Follow these guidelines to help ensure the safety of you and your family during a planned power outage:

### *Your Home*

- If your home has a security system, consult your owner's manual or contact the service you are subscribed to. You may need to disengage the system before or while your service is interrupted.
- If you typically use a garage door opener, make sure you have a house key to regain entry into your home, in case your service is still out when you return.
- Know how to manually operate your garage door. If power is lost, your garage door opener will not work.

### *Electronic Equipment*

- Use surge suppressors to protect sensitive electronic equipment, such as computers. If possible, unplug all sensitive equipment before any planned outages.
- If you forget to unplug your electronics before the outage, be sure to unplug the equipment prior to service being restored to avoid surge damage.
- If you must leave your home while the power is out, double-check that all heat producing appliances, such as stoves, irons and curling irons are unplugged.
- Make sure you have flashlights, a battery-powered radio and fresh batteries in an easily accessible area.

**For more information:**  
[www.cdph.ca.gov](http://www.cdph.ca.gov)

**Tehama County Health Services Agency  
Public Health**  
[www.tehamacohealthservices.net](http://www.tehamacohealthservices.net)



## Power Outages and Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless, tasteless gas produced by burning gasoline, wood, propane, charcoal or other fuel. Improperly ventilated appliances and engines, particularly in a tightly sealed or enclosed space, may allow carbon monoxide to accumulate to dangerous levels. When power outages occur during natural and manmade emergencies, the use of alternative sources of fuel or electricity for heating, cooling, or cooking can cause carbon monoxide (CO) to build up in a home, garage, or camper and poison the people and animals inside. Exposure to CO can cause loss of consciousness and death.

### *In the event of a power outage:*

- Never use a [generator](#), pressure washer, or any gasoline-powered engine inside your home, basement, or garage.
- Place the generator at least 20 feet from any window, door, or vent. Use an extension cord that is more than 20 feet long to keep the generator at a safe distance.
- When using a generator, use a battery-powered CO detector in your home.
- If conditions are too hot or too cold, seek shelter with friends or at a community shelter.
- If CO poisoning is suspected, call 911 or your local Poison Control Center

## Power Outages and Safe Drinking Water

When the power goes out, water purification systems may fail and water may not be available or it can become contaminated. Your local health department can make specific recommendations for boiling or treating water in your area. Safe water for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene includes bottled, boiled or treated water. Follow these general guidelines for safe water during a power outage:

- Do not use contaminated water to wash or prepare food, wash dishes or hands, brush your teeth, make ice or use for baby formula.
- If you are uncertain if the water came from a safe source, boil or treat it before using it. Use only bottled, boiled or treated water until your supply is tested and found safe.
- Boiling water, when practical, is the preferred way to kill harmful bacteria and parasites. Bringing water to a rolling boil for one minute will kill most organisms.
- When boiling water is not possible, follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations for safely treating water with chlorine.
- If using chlorine tablets or iodine tablets, follow the directions that come with the tablets. Note: Treating water with chlorine tablets, iodine tablets or liquid bleach will not kill parasitic organisms.
- Use a bleach solution to rinse water containers before reusing them.

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