The power just went out

If anyone is hurt or in danger, call 911.

1. **Keep the fridge and freezer closed.** A closed fridge keeps food safe for up to 4 hours. A full freezer holds about 48 hours (24 if half full).[1]
2. **Use flashlights, not candles.**[2]
3. **Generators, camp stoves, and grills go outdoors only**, at least 20 feet from windows. Never heat your home with a gas stove or oven.[3]
4. **Unplug appliances and electronics.** Power can come back with surges that cause damage.[3]
5. **Medical devices or medicine that needs the fridge?** Follow the plan you made with your provider. If it is too hot or cold at home, go to a community location with power.[3]
6. **Stay at least 35 feet from fallen power lines** and call 911.[2]
7. **CO alarm or headache, dizziness, nausea?** Get outside to fresh air right away, then call 911.[4]

Don’t: run a generator in the house or garage, even with doors open.[4] Don’t taste food to test it: if it is 40°F or warmer, throw it out.[2]

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Boil-water notice

Follow the notice from your water utility or health department.

1. **Use bottled water or boiled tap water** for drinking, cooking, preparing food, and brushing teeth.[5]
2. **Boil: a full rolling boil for 1 minute.** Above 6,500 feet, boil for 3 minutes. Let it cool before use.[5]
3. **Boil it even if you filter it**, including home filters and filter pitchers.[5]
4. **Bathing:** don't swallow the water. For babies and young children, consider a sponge bath.[5]
5. **Dishes:** use disposable plates if you can. A dishwasher is generally fine if it has a sanitizing cycle or a final rinse of at least 150°F.[5]
6. **Handwashing:** in many cases tap water and soap are fine. Follow your local officials' notice.[5]
7. **Feeding a baby?** Read CDC's advisory page or ask your pediatrician about formula before you mix it.[5]

Don't: boil water if the notice says **"Do not drink"** or **"Do not use."** Boiling does not remove chemicals or toxins. Use bottled water.[5]

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Phones or the cell network are down

If anyone is hurt or in danger, call 911.

1. **Call 911 only for emergencies.**[6]
2. **Text instead of calling.** Texts may get through when calls don't, though they can be delayed.[6]
3. **Keep calls short** and only pass on vital information. Fewer calls also saves battery.[6]
4. **Wait 10 seconds before redialing** a call that didn't connect.[6]
5. **Turn on a battery or hand-crank radio** for official news. NOAA Weather Radio broadcasts warnings 24 hours a day.[7]
6. **Use your paper contact list** and your plan's meeting place if you can't reach each other.[2] [8]

Don't: redial over and over. It adds to the jam.[6]

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Wildfire nearby or an evacuation warning

If anyone is hurt or in danger, call 911.

1. **See a wildfire? Call 911.**[9]
2. **Be ready to leave quickly with your go-bag.** Leave if local authorities advise it or if you feel you are in danger.[10]
3. **If you are told to evacuate, leave immediately** and follow the official routes.[9]
4. **Shut off an outside propane tank** before you go, if you have one.[9]
5. **Close and lock doors and windows.** Leave a note saying when you left and where you are going.[11]
6. **Wear an N95 mask** in smoke if you have one.[12]
7. **Get alerts:** make sure your phone is signed up for your county's emergency alerts.[9]

Don't: leave sprinklers or water running. It lowers the water pressure firefighters need.[9] Don't take shortcuts: they may be blocked.[11]

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You have been told to evacuate

If you are in immediate danger, call 911.

1. **Follow local officials' instructions.** Your route may be on foot.[11]
2. **Grab your go-bag**, medicines, phone, and chargers.[11]
3. **Close and lock doors and windows.**[11]
4. **Unplug small electronics.** Leave the fridge and freezer plugged in unless there is a flood risk.[11]
5. **Tell someone where you are going** and leave a note saying when you left.[11]
6. **Take your pets.** Service animals are accepted at all shelters, but many shelters and hotels don't allow pets, so know a pet-friendly place.[13]
7. **Stay on the recommended routes** and away from downed power lines.[11]

Don't: take shortcuts. They may be blocked.[11] Don't drive through flood water.[14]

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The shaking just stopped

If anyone is hurt or in danger, call 911.

1. **Expect aftershocks.** If you feel one: Drop, Cover, and Hold On.[15]
2. **In a damaged building? Go outside** and move away from it. Don’t go into damaged buildings.[15]
3. **Trapped? Text, or bang on a pipe or wall.**[15]
4. **Smell gas or think there’s a leak?** Leave the home and call 911.[16]
5. **Text, don’t call.** Texts may be more reliable and save battery.[15]
6. **Listen for official news** on a battery radio, TV, or phone alerts.[15]
7. **Near the coast?** Go inland or to higher ground right after the shaking stops.[15]

Don’t: turn the gas back on yourself. Only a qualified professional should do that.[2]

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Flash flood warning

If anyone is hurt or in danger, call 911.

1. **A Flash Flood Warning means a flash flood is happening or about to.** In a flood-prone spot, move to high ground now.[17]
2. **Turn Around, Don’t Drown.** Don’t walk, swim, or drive through flood water.[14]
3. **Six inches of moving water can knock you down.** One foot can sweep your car away.[14]
4. **Go to higher ground or a higher floor.**[14]
5. **Stay off bridges over fast-moving water.** They can wash away without warning.[14]
6. **In a canyon or wash?** Flash floods can come with little or no notice. Climb out, don’t outrun it downstream.[18][17]

Don’t: drive around barriers or into water you can’t see the bottom of.[14]

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Dangerous heat today

If anyone is hurt or in danger, call 911.

1. **Someone confused, very hot, or collapsed? That can be heat stroke: call 911** or get them to a hospital now.[19]
2. **No AC? Go to a cooling center**, library, or mall.[19]
3. **A fan is not enough on its own.** Fans don’t lower body temperature.[19]
4. **Drink plenty of fluids.**[19]
5. **Never leave people or pets in a closed car.**[19]
6. **Check on family, older adults, and neighbors.**[19]

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Wildfire smoke outside

If anyone is hurt or in danger, call 911.

1. **Not told to evacuate? Stay inside** somewhere safe, or go to a community building where smoke is lower.[12]
2. **Fire very close?** It may be best to leave. Watch local alerts for when to evacuate.[20]
3. **Run a portable air cleaner or a better HVAC filter** if you have one. Both can remove smoke particles.[20]
4. **Wear an N95 mask** outdoors in smoke.[12]
5. **Check air quality** on local news, EPA's AirNow, or your state air-quality site.[20]

Don't: use an air cleaner that makes ozone.[20]

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Told to shelter in place

If anyone is hurt or in danger, call 911.

1. **Bring everyone inside, pets too.**[13]
2. **Lock doors. Close windows, air vents, and fireplace dampers.**[13]
3. **Turn off fans, air conditioning, and forced-air heat.**[13]
4. **Take your kit** into an interior room with few windows.[13]
5. **If told the air is contaminated, seal the room** with plastic sheeting and duct tape: corners first, then the edges.[13]
6. **Stay tuned to local media** for official instructions. They may take time to arrive.[13]

Don't: go outside to check until officials say it is safe.[13]

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Stranded in your car in snow

If anyone is hurt or in danger, call 911.

1. **Stay inside the car.**[21]
2. **Signal for help:** hang a bright cloth (red if you have it) on the antenna, and raise the hood after the snow stops.[22]
3. **Run the engine about 10 minutes each hour** for heat.[22]
4. **Keep the exhaust pipe clear of snow** and open a downwind window slightly.[22]
5. **Use blankets and dry layers** from your car kit.[21]

Don’t: run the engine with a snow-blocked exhaust pipe. Carbon monoxide can build up.[22] [4]

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Carbon monoxide alarm is sounding

Get out first. Then call 911.

1. **Get to fresh air now:** outdoors, or by an open window or door.[23]
2. **Call 911 from the fresh air** and stay there until help arrives.[23] [4]
3. **Know the signs:** headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, sleepiness, confusion.[4]
4. **Bring people and pets with you.** You can’t see or smell CO.[23]

Don’t: assume opening windows or running fans makes it safe to stay. They don’t prevent CO buildup.[23]

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A “loved one” calls asking for money

Feeling rushed and scared is the warning sign. Slow down.

1. **Don’t trust the voice.** Scammers can clone a voice from a short clip posted online.[24]
2. **Ask for your family code word.**[25]
3. **Hang up and call them back** on a number you know is theirs.[24]
4. **Can’t reach them?** Call another family member or their friends.[24]
5. **Wire transfer, crypto, or gift cards?** Those are signs of a scam.[24]
6. **Report it** at ReportFraud.ftc.gov. Lost money? Also file at ic3.gov.[24] [25]

Don’t: send money, gift cards, or crypto to anyone you have only met online or by phone.[25]

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Fridge and freezer: keep or toss

When in doubt, throw it out. Never taste food to decide if it's safe.[1]

1. **Keep the doors closed.** A closed fridge keeps food safe for up to 4 hours. A full freezer holds about 48 hours (24 hours if half full).[1]
2. **Over 4 hours?** Move fridge food to a cooler with ice or frozen gel packs, enough to hold 40 °F or below.[1]
3. **Check the thermometer.** Safe means fridge 40 °F or below, freezer 0 °F or below.[1]
4. **Toss after 4 hours without power:** meat, poultry, fish, eggs, lunch meat, hot dogs, leftovers, casseroles, soups, pizza, milk, cream, yogurt, soft cheeses, cut fruit and vegetables, cooked vegetables, opened juices, creamy dressings, batters and doughs, cream pies and pastries, garlic in oil.[1]
5. **Thawed frozen food** that still has ice crystals, or stayed at 40 °F or below, can be refrozen. The quality may suffer.[1]
6. **Flood water:** toss any food that may have touched it, unless it was in a waterproof container. Toss damaged cans, and a fridge or freezer that was under water, even partly.[1]
7. **Fire:** toss all food that was near a fire, including food in cans, jars, and the fridge.[1]

Don't: judge by smell or taste. When in doubt, throw it out.[1]

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Make water safe to drink

Under a boil-water notice, follow your water utility or health department first.

1. **Cloudy?** Filter it through a clean cloth, paper towel, or coffee filter, or let it settle and draw off the clear water.[26]
2. **Best: boil.** A rolling boil for 1 minute (3 minutes above 6,500 feet). Let it cool. Store in clean, covered containers.[26]
3. **No way to boil? Use bleach.** Regular, unscented chlorine bleach only; no scented, color-safe, or added-cleaner bleach.[27] Follow the label's directions if it has them.[26]
4. **Bleach with 5–9% sodium hypochlorite:** 8 drops per gallon, or ½ teaspoon per 5 gallons. Double it if the water is cloudy, colored, or very cold.[26]
5. **Stir, then wait at least 30 minutes** before drinking.[26]
6. **Tablets or drops:** follow the label. Iodine and chlorine tablets will not kill Cryptosporidium; chlorine dioxide tablets will, if used as directed.[26]
7. **Portable filter?** Filters don't remove viruses. After filtering, add a chemical disinfectant.[26]

Don't: boil or treat water when the notice says "Do not drink" or "Do not use." Use bottled water.[26]

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