



Emergency Preparedness Tips

Are you ready for a storm?



A severe storm can cause power outages, and the best time to prepare is before a storm strikes. It takes at least two things to get through the effects of a severe storm: preparation and patience. Not only might they make the situation tolerable, but sometimes they may actually save your life. Our goal is to get your power back on as quickly and safely as possible.

If you lose power, report your outage by calling **888.301.7700** (MA), **800.852.3339** (NH Capital Region), or **800.582.7276** (NH Seacoast), or by using our online form at www.unitil.com/report-outage.

Stay away from downed power lines

Keep your distance from any downed power lines, and call 911 to report them to the police or fire department. Treat all wires – even those that are hanging or downed – as if they are “live” (energized). Don’t drive over downed lines, and if a downed line is in or near water (even a little puddle), keep your distance from the water. And whether a power line is down or not, don’t touch anything that might be in contact with it, such as a tree limb.

Stock up on batteries and easy-to-prepare food

Give yourself the greatest flexibility in meal preparation and the greatest comfort once the sun goes down. Don’t forget flashlights (one for each person in your family), batteries and a manual can opener.

Set aside water

This is vital if you depend on a water pump that might be disabled during a storm. Sanitize and fill spare containers with water for drinking. Fill your bathtub with water for use in the toilet. A bucket of water poured in the toilet bowl is all that’s needed for flushing.

Set your refrigerator and freezer to their coldest settings

Do this a half day or so before the storm is scheduled to hit. Be sure to return the settings to their normal position as soon as electricity has been restored.

Get extra ice

Ice helps maintain cold temperatures in your freezer and refrigerator. Use plastic bags filled with ice (or water, if you have enough time to freeze it) in the freezer. Use block ice, if possible, in the refrigerator. And should the ice melt, you can drink the water.

Check medications that require refrigeration

Be sure you know if they will be affected by a prolonged interruption of power. You may want to talk with your pharmacist. You may also want to keep a small cooler handy.

Customers with life-support equipment

If you or someone in your household relies on electrically operated life-support equipment, you need a backup plan to cope with power outages.

- An alternate source of electric power such as a battery backup system, an uninterruptible power supply or a properly installed generator for the life-support equipment
- Emergency telephone numbers (doctor, fire, police and ambulance)
- A plan for vacating your home during a prolonged outage

Unplug sensitive equipment

Voltage irregularities can occur for any number of reasons during or after a storm, especially if there has been damage on or near your home. The safest thing to do is to unplug any sensitive electrical devices (e.g., TV, DVD player, stereo, microwave, computer, iPod, answering machine, garage door opener). Planning ahead, you may wish to consider surge suppressors. They can be purchased either for individual pieces of equipment or for your entire house.



Prepare alternative sources of heat or find an emergency shelter

Even a gas or oil furnace needs electricity to operate, so if you have a fireplace or wood stove as an alternative heat source, be sure you have enough wood. A portable electric generator can be a valuable backup source of power to operate your furnace and appliances. Just be sure you have it installed by a licensed electrician. If you have no alternative heat, find out where an emergency shelter will be, if it is needed. Call your local fire or police department or local Red Cross chapter. In frigid weather, if your power is likely to be out for more than a few days, you may want to call your plumber and ask about draining your home's water pipes so they don't freeze and burst.

For more information, visit www.unitil.com/outage-center where you'll also find links to helpful resources, our real-time outage map, and frequent restoration updates.