

Health Advice for Power Outages

Power outages can occur at any time from planned maintenance works to a significant emergency. This can impact upon residents' health, especially during very hot or cold weather, or for residents who require electricity for medical support. Residents can take the following steps to ensure that their health is not impacted.

Before a Planned Power Outage

- Charge your mobile phone and other IT devices in case of emergency calls;
- Consider moving to an alternative location during the power outage;
- Keep a battery powered torch and radio and spare batteries;
- Consider alternative cooking facilities and cooling;
- Consume and reduce amount of perishable food stored in refrigerator and freezer to avoid wastage (unused food can be moved from the fridge to the freezer prior to outage);
- Buy non-perishable foods to remove dependence on refrigerator;
- In addition, if a person in the household has medical or mobility issues and requires power for essential medical equipment:
 - Register with your energy provider as a life support customer;
 - Put in place your management plan for not having power. The plan could cover:
 - What steps will you take – go to a friend's house?
 - How will you get there – do you have transport and will you be able to transport your equipment?
 - Keep backup medical equipment fully charged at all times and ready to go if you need to use it;
 - Use alternate storage for refrigerated medications (E.g. esky with ice);
 - Use alternate power supplies to power medical equipment; and
 - Contact a relative, friend, or carer to help you during the outage if required.

During a Power Outage

- If the outage is occurring during summer or hot weather:
 - Drink plenty of water, even when not thirsty;
 - Wear lightweight, light-coloured clothing;
 - If you remain at home, move to the lowest, coolest, part of your home;

- For extended periods, consider going to a movie theatre, shopping mall or home of a relative or friend.
- If the outage is occurring during winter or cold weather:
 - Put on layers of warm clothing; and
 - For extended periods, consider going to a home of a relative or friend that has heating.

Food Safety during a Power Outage

- Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed (Only open when necessary):
 - An unopened refrigerator will keep food cold for about 4 hours;
 - A full freezer will keep the temperature cold for about 48 hours;
 - Bagged ice can be placed under food packages or an insulating blanket can be placed over cold or frozen food;
- Throw away any food that is spoiled:
 - Throw out perishable refrigerated food if the power has been off for more than 4 hours;
 - If frozen food thaws, either cook and eat it immediately, or throw it out, do not refreeze thawed food;
 - Food should not be eaten if it has an unusual smell, colour, or texture;
 - **IF IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT.**
- Contact your doctor if you are concerned about medications having spoiled.

For Further Information

- For information about the power outage, contact ActewAGL on 6248 3555.
- For emergency help when your life is at risk, call 000.
- Further information on food safety and heat-related stress is available on the ACT Health website.

Please note: Having a backup plan is still important even if you are a registered life support customer...unexpected power outages can happen.

Accessibility

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If English is not your first language and you need the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS), please call 13 14 50.

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