



# POWER OUTAGE RESPONSE GUIDE



Power outages or blackouts can result from storm damage, flooding and high winds, or from unforeseen incidents such as a building collapse or an explosion. They can also happen during hot weather when power usage is at its peak. Many services, including transportation and healthcare services, can be disrupted during a power outage.



## Know who is at risk.

People most likely to be affected by power outages include:

- ▶ People who rely on life-sustaining equipment that requires electricity. If you or a member of your family uses life-sustaining equipment, contact Con Edison at 212-243-1900 to receive priority attention during a power outage.
- ▶ People who live in homes without heat (if the outage occurs during cold days) or who do not have a working air conditioner (if the outage occurs during hot days) AND:
  - ▶ Are 65 or older
  - ▶ Suffer from chronic medical problems such as heart disease, breathing problems, diabetes or obesity
  - ▶ Have serious mental illness or developmental disabilities
  - ▶ Take medications that affect the body's ability to maintain a normal temperature. **Check with your doctor for information and advice about any medicines you may be taking.**
  - ▶ Use drugs or drink heavily
  - ▶ Are socially isolated, have limited mobility or are unable to leave the house

## GENERAL GUIDELINES

- ▶ Get health information from credible sources ([nyc.gov](http://nyc.gov), [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov) and 311).
- ▶ Sign up for Notify NYC for information about emergency events.
- ▶ If you or anyone you know feels overwhelmed or needs help coping, visit [lifenet.nyc](http://lifenet.nyc) for free help in your language.
- ▶ In an emergency, always call 911.



## Reach out.

- Check on neighbors, friends and relatives who may be at risk if it is safe to do so.
- For more information about how to stay safe during extreme heat or cold weather, visit <http://www.nyc.gov/health> and search “Extreme Heat Response Guide for Individuals & Families” or “Cold Weather Response Guide for Individuals & Families.”



## Keep food and water safe.

- Keep foods that need little to no cooking and no refrigeration.
- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to prevent food from spoiling.
  - Move milk, cheese, meats and other perishables into the freezer compartment. If the freezer is only partially full, keep all items close together and stacked on top of each other.
  - If doors remain closed, food in the refrigerator will stay cold for four hours, and food in a full freezer will stay cold for two days (one day for a half-full freezer).
  - Throw away any refrigerated food that has an unusual odor, color or texture.  
**If in doubt, throw it out.**
- Use bottled water if tap water is declared unsafe by local authorities.



## Prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.

- Make sure you have a working carbon monoxide detector and smoke alarm in your home. If your building owner does not provide a carbon monoxide detector and smoke alarm, call 311.
  - For more information on how to test your carbon monoxide detector, visit <http://www.nyc.gov/health> and search “Prevent Carbon Monoxide Poisoning.”
- Never use gas stoves or ovens to heat your home. Kerosene heaters and propane space heaters are illegal in New York City.
- If you smell gas or your carbon monoxide detector goes off, open the windows, then go outside and call 911.
  - Do not re-enter until your home is declared safe.
  - Do not use candles, matches or other open flames to check for leaking gas lines.
- Use generators outdoors and away from doors, windows and vents. Always follow the manufacturer’s instructions.



## If there is an extended power outage, prepare to evacuate.

If you are told to evacuate:

- Grab your “Go Bag” with your important documents, identification, medication, bottled water, nonperishable food, a first aid kit and a battery-operated flashlight and radio. Go to <http://www.nyc.gov> and search “Go Bag” for more information.
- Stay with friends or family who live outside the evacuation zones. If you have no other shelter, go to an evacuation center. Call 311 to find your nearest evacuation center and for information about transportation options.
- Note that legal pets and service animals are allowed in all NYC shelters. Be sure to bring your pet’s dog license, food, leash, cage and medication.



## Take care to avoid injuries.

- Avoid dark staircases if possible. Use flashlights when needed.
- Never touch or go near fallen wires.
- Be careful when walking, biking or driving outside as traffic lights may not be working.