

What To Do When the Lights Go Out

There are many causes of power outages - wind, ice and snow, lightning, transmission line problems, construction damage to underground lines, traffic accidents affecting power poles, equipment failures and more. Major Storms or other natural disasters sometimes cause major outages - affecting a large number of consumers over an extended period of time. Firelands offers the following information to help you weather the storm.



Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



Should I call Firelands?

In the immediate aftermath of a major storm, we ask that you call only to report safety hazards such as downed power lines or equipment that is sparking. During major storms, our telephone lines can become overloaded with consumer calls. In these situations, we are aware of wide-spread damage to our distribution lines and long-distance transmission lines.

Can I get information on-line?

Yes. You can get information on-line if you have a laptop or other battery-powered Internet connected device. Visit our website - www.firelandsec.com for the latest updates.

Outage Checklist

- ☐ Check all circuit breakers or fuses to help determine if your service outage might be the result of a household problem.
- ☐ If you have significant flooding or water damage in your home, do not touch electric appliances or devices in wet or damp areas.
- ☐ Inspect the area outside your home near the meter. If the meter or any of the conduit piping and wires on the wall of your home or office are gone or look damaged, call an electrician.
- ☐ Turn off your major appliances so that you can start them gradually once power is restored to avoid damage to sensitive equipment. Leave one light on so that you know when your power is restored.

Outage Safety Checklist

- ☐ Don't operate lanterns, heaters or fuel-fired cook stoves without adequate ventilation.
- ☐ Always refuel appliances outside, away from flames and sparks. Wipe up spills immediately.
- ☐ Do not burn charcoal indoors because it releases dangerous carbon monoxide.
- ☐ Don't allow children to carry candles or oil lamps in the house. A fall could spell disaster!
- ☐ Never operate portable generators inside the house, including basements and attached garages!

Treat all downed wires as "live" power

It can be difficult to distinguish a power line from a cable television or telephone line, so you must regard any downed line as energized and potentially dangerous. If there is water near the line, the risk is even greater since water is a conductor of electricity.

Never touch a downed wire regardless of how harmless it looks! And keep others away from this potential hazard. To report any downed lines and equipment, call Firelands at 1-800-533-8658.

Heat & Cool

During an outage, your house will stay warm/cool for several hours. Your home will maintain a comfortable temperature for a longer time if it is well insulated and has energy efficient windows or storm windows that are sealed and caulked.

Appliances

Turn off appliances that were operating at the time of the outage, including your heating and/or cooling system. Leave one light on so that you will know when power is restored. Once electricity is restored, do not turn all appliances on at once. Gradually turning on your appliances over a 10-minute period will help to prevent overloads on the system.

Water

If there is sufficient warning before the storm, fill your bathtub and spare containers with water in case your electric water pump or the local water systems are affected by a power failure. This should be enough for drinking, cooking and washing until service is restored.

Food

If you have advanced warning before a storm, turn controls on your refrigerator to the coldest position. Food will stay frozen between 36 and 48 hours in a fully-loaded freezer if you keep the door closed. If a freezer is half-full, the food will generally keep for 24 hours. A freezer full of meat generally keeps frozen longer than a freezer full of baked goods.

Why can't an agent tell me when my power will be restored?

It is impossible to accurately predict restorations of specific circuits serving particular residences because of the many challenges that restoration workers face.

What is my best resource for information on the restoration effort?

Firelands works hard to update the local news media on the overall restoration progress during major power outages. Listening to local radio stations in Ashland, Mansfield and Norwalk, or checking our website - www.firelandsec.com - are the best ways for you to be informed of storm restoration progress. Be sure to have an emergency kit, equipped with a battery-operated radio and fresh batteries, so you're ready in case of a major power outage.

How does Firelands decide which customers to restore first?

Firelands' goal is to restore power to as many people as possible - as quickly as possible, while isolating individual outages for later restoration.

Once substations are restored, large three phase lines are next, then large single-phase lines and individual lines after that. When scattered outages remain, consumers with power are asked to turn on an outside light to help crews locate problem areas faster and easier.

How does Firelands handle tree damage?

Firelands' tree crews and contractors conduct tree trimming throughout the year to keep power lines free of limbs and debris. Following a storm, Firelands tree crews do not remove fallen limbs or branches from your property. For tree removal, you will need to call a landscape or tree contractor.

Do not attempt to remove tree limbs or debris within 10-feet of a power line or sparking equipment. If you notice downed lines or sparking equipment, please contact us immediately at 1-800-533-8658.

Why can my home be the only house on the road without power?

Fuses or circuit breakers in your home could have tripped and halted power, tree limbs could have fallen on the line serving your home, fuses on the transformer that serves your home may have blown or could be damaged, and the primary line feeding your transformer could be damaged.

Why would I lose electricity in only part of my house?

You could have a tripped circuit breaker, a blown fuse or have a broken connector or wire at one of the service leads to your house. Sometimes damage to these leads leaves only the 120-volt outlets (or some of them) working. In this case, larger appliances that need 240-volt service (water heaters, air conditioners and ovens) may be inoperable until repairs are made. However, if some of your lights are extremely bright or dim, you should avoid using these circuits to avoid potential damage to equipment. Dim lights can indicate a low voltage condition. If this occurs, turn off or unplug any appliance or other devices that use electric motors. Low voltage can severely damage electric motors. If there is a problem with a service lead to your home, Firelands crews will repair the wires when they arrive to restore power.

Backup generators

Some consumers use backup, or standby generators to provide power during outages. Firelands needs to be aware of backup generators because of safety hazards they can pose to line workers - and to you. Please notify us if you are using a backup generator.

The problem arises when the power from the backup generators feed power back onto distribution lines, which can electrocute personnel working on the lines.

On the other hand, power from Firelands' lines can feed into the generator and cause a fire at your residence. To avoid these hazards, be sure to have your generator installed by an electrician and be sure that it has a double-throw transfer switch to isolate the generator device from the power grid.

Remember that appliances can be connected directly to the generator independent of the household wiring. Make sure that all manufacturers' instructions are followed and that only the recommended number of appliances are plugged into the generator.

Why do I sometimes experience brief outages that call for resetting of appliances and clocks?

Usually, these outages occur when a protective device, called a recloser, detects interference on the line. If interference is detected, the line will de-energize briefly to determine if the problem is prolonged or only temporary. If the problem is temporary, the line will re-energize quickly. If the problem is prolonged, the line will de-energize until the trouble is cleared by Firelands.

Prepare an Emergency Kit

To best prepare for a possible power outage, we suggest that you plan ahead. Items you may wish to include in a large water resisitant storage container:

- ☐ Updated list of vital telephone numbers
- ☐ Corded telephone that doesn't require electricity (don't rely on cellular or cordless phones)
- ☐ Flashlights, lanterns and light sticks
- ☐ Supply of fresh batteries
- ☐ Battery-powered radios or televisions
- ☐ Wind-up or battery operated clock
- ☐ Blankets and pillows
- ☐ Candles and lighters or waterproof matches
- ☐ Drinking/cooking water or bottled water
- ☐ Prescription medications
- ☐ Fire extinguishers and first aid kits
- ☐ Portable heater (oil or gas)
- ☐ Camping equipment such as sleeping bags, camp stoves, lanterns
- ☐ Ready-to-eat canned foods
- ☐ A manual can opener
- ☐ Dried foods (jerkey, trail mix, energy bars)
- ☐ Disposable plates and utensils and a cooler
- ☐ Supplies for young children and pets
- ☐ Paper products
- ☐ Hand cleaner and disinfecting wipes
- ☐ Appropriate clothing for current climate conditions
- ☐ Manufacturers' instructions for opening power operated doors
- ☐ Portable generator (read manufacturer's handbook for safety precautions)
- ☐ Extension cords (for portable generator use)

What To Do When the Lights Go Out (cont'd.)

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Dim lights can indicate a low voltage condition. If this occurs, turn off or unplug any appliance or other devices that use electric motors. Low voltage can severely damage electric motors. If there is a problem with a service lead to your home, Firelands crews will repair the wires when they arrive to restore power.