



How to prepare to weather a storm

No matter what time of year it is, storms are a major factor in power outages. The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC) has compiled the following information regarding steps that households can take to prepare for storms, whether it is summer or winter.

Essential items

The American Red Cross and the Federal Emergency Management Agency suggest that the following items be stored to help a household through a power outage. They also suggest consumers keep a minimum three day supply of water and food on hand at a minimum. Some additional recommendations include:

- ▶ One gallon of water per person per day
- ▶ Canned foods, such as meats, fruits, vegetables, juices as well as peanut butter, crackers and granola bars. Also, keep a manual can opener with these items
- ▶ Foods for infants and others on special diets
- ▶ A first aid kit containing bandages, gauze pads, adhesive tape, scissors, needle, cleansing agent and any non-prescription drugs that members of the household normally use
- ▶ Paper cups, plates and utensils
- ▶ Battery operated radio and flashlights with extra batteries
- ▶ At least one change of clothes and an extra pair of shoes
- ▶ Blankets or other items to stay warm during the winter
- ▶ Any toiletries or other personal care items



Alternative power/heating sources

Just as the essential items are needed to survive, having the appropriate heating or cooling equipment is important too. For households where there are frequent power outages, a generator may be an item to invest in since it can be used to keep a refrigerator running or provide power for medical equipment. During the summer, generators can be used to run fans or other cooling equipment to make for a more comfortable environment.

For winter outages, a gasoline or kerosene heater may provide warmth, although there are many safety precautions that should be followed. If there is a fireplace in the house, make sure that there is enough firewood for several days worth of heating. Before winter starts, make sure that the chimney has been cleaned to avoid the build up of carbon monoxide. Additionally, consumers should check their water pipes frequently during winter power outages to avoid pipes freezing and bursting. If possible, insulate water pipes to help keep them from freezing.

For more information

Consumers can learn more about preparing for outages from the Federal Emergency Management Agency at www.fema.gov or by calling 1-800-480-2520. The American Red Cross also has information available at www.redcross.org or consumers may call the local chapter.

The OCC has prepared materials regarding safety tips for using alternative heating sources, selection and use of generators, ways to avoid frozen water pipes, and information on selecting and using the appropriate extension cords. Contact the OCC toll free at 1-877-PICKOCC (1-877-742-5622) to request this information, or view the publications online at www.pickocc.org.

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For additional information from the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel:

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