

# COLUMBIA COUNTY

## EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

"Be Prepared, Keep Informed, Get Involved"

### Utility Outage Tips

- Every family should maintain a home emergency supply kit. Kits should contain items such as an updated family emergency plan, a battery operated radio, flashlights, a first aid kit and at least three days of food and water for each family member. Check our web site for emergency kit ideas and tips.
- A list of possible family relocation points should be pre-identified in your family plan in case a utility outage that is going to last for an extended period of time makes alternate living arrangements necessary. Part of your kit should be a "go" bag, prepared with all your needs for a stay of at least a few nights, to help facilitate this process.
- If a situation arises in which you must seek shelter at a Red Cross Mass Care Center you might need to make other arrangements for your pets. In Columbia County, CART volunteers work hard to support providing pet shelter in association with identified Red Cross shelters. At least, you'll need to consider your and your pet's needs in the event of an evacuation: have ID, license/tag, and medications ready.
- It's very important that you report utility outages directly to the affected utility, as they need this information to determine extent of outage and where to send their repair crews. The 911 Center does not dispatch utility repair crews, and 911 should only be used for emergencies!
- For an outage-related problem that creates a fire or safety hazard requiring police, fire, or ambulance services, call 911 for assistance with the emergency.
- During a power outage, refrain as much as possible from opening and closing the refrigerator or freezer to help extend the time before the food spoils. As for food safety, if you're in doubt, throw it out!
- In anticipation of power being restored, turn off items that use or demand a lot of electricity or that might be damaged by a power surge. Leave something "on" so you'll know when the power returns.
- Use only flashlights, battery operated radios, or similar devices. Anything that „burns fuel“ to create energy also creates carbon monoxide, a poisonous, odorless, invisible gas.
- During a power outage, if your well stops operating and water is needed to flush toilets, turn off the power supply (gas or electric) to your hot water heater and drain it as necessary to supply water for flushing. Remember when the power returns and the water starts flowing again the hot water tank must be refilled prior to turning on the gas or electric (which should be done by qualified persons only). If you have a lot of snow, some can be added to a container of water to accelerate melting for toilet flushing. Your emergency kit should contain at least three days of drinking water for each family member.

**For more information:**

[Before, During, After a Blackout on ReadyPA.org](#)

[CDC - What You Need to Know When the Power Goes Out Unexpectedly](#)

[FEMA's Utility Outage handout](#)

[Steps to take in an outage, PPL Electric](#)

[PPL Electric's Outage Center](#)