

# Tips for Seniors and People with Disabilities:

## Power Outage



### Prepare

1. If you are dependent on electric wheelchairs, or on any breathing machines or other life-sustaining devices that depend on electricity, be sure to:
  - Have your batteries fully charged each day. (If possible, have an extra battery pack on hand.)
  - Establish a support network of friends and neighbors who can check in periodically if the power is out, to assure that assistance is available if needed.
  - Work with your doctor, case managers and caregivers to develop a plan on what you will do if the power goes out.
  - Give your local fire and police departments notice ahead of time, if lack of electricity would create an immediate threat to life or safety. Make sure your house numbers are visible from the street.
2. Keep a flashlight or lantern equipped with fresh batteries within easy reach, so that there is some light immediately available if the power does go out. For people with limited reach or grasping ability, inexpensive battery-operated touch lamps are a good option. Such lights can be installed in areas of greatest use, and are small enough to be carried in an emergency. Do not use candles for light or heat in an emergency, as they can be fire hazards.
3. Store extra blankets and warm clothing within easy reach. Most homes will retain some heat for several hours during electrical outages; do not use bar-b-ques, gas powered appliances, or propane heaters as heat sources, as the result can be carbon monoxide poisoning.
4. Keep a battery operated radio on hand, with at least one set of extra batteries. Monitor radio stations to determine the extent and probable duration of any electrical outages. The official emergency alert station for San Francisco is: KCBS 740 AM.
5. Maintain extra supplies of drinking water within easy reach. Keeping plastic bottles of water in your freezer has two benefits: a) you can move them to the refrigerator in a power outage and they will help maintain the cold b) you can use them for drinking water if you run out.
6. Check monthly electric bills to determine the applicable Power Block number, as that is usually how the blackout areas will be identified.

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### Medicine

1. Have several days' supply of medicine and durable medical goods in a convenient location. Keep a copy of emergency contact numbers and current prescriptions in the same location.
2. Ask your doctor about any medicine you keep refrigerated. Most medicine will be fine to leave in the closed refrigerator for at least 3 hours. Some medicines your doctor may advise you to put in the freezer or an ice chest.

### Phones

Keep a standard telephone plugged into a second phone jack, or available as a substitute to use during a blackout. Cordless telephones, or any answering machine that plugs into an electrical outlet, will not operate during a blackout.

A cellular telephone may be a good backup option, but be aware that in a widespread emergency any communication network may quickly become overloaded with calls.

### During a Power Outage

1. Turn off all appliances, computers and lights – except for one that will indicate when power has been restored.
2. Do NOT open your refrigerator unless you must. Your refrigerator will maintain its temperature for some time without electrical power.
3. Turn on your battery powered radio to KCBS – 740 AM
4. **If you, or any member of your family, has a police, fire, or medical emergency, call 911.**

### Questions?

Call **PG&E's Customer Service Line, 1-800-743-5000** to learn about services, payment plans, and rates for seniors and person's with disabilities. Some services require eligibility criteria.