

# Prepare for Outages

Do you know what to do if the power goes out? Would you know where to find a flashlight or how to report an outage?

The chances of a power outage occurring increases with the arrival of winter and changing weather conditions. Being prepared and knowing what to do can help you better deal with a power outage.

## Be Prepared

A power outage can occur anytime. Because they sometimes can be lengthy, every home should have provisions for dealing with a power outage. Having ready access to the following items can make all the difference.

- **Flashlight and extra batteries:** A flashlight and extra batteries that are easy to find in the dark can be the most essential tools when trying to get things under control. Keep several flashlights handy at all times.
- **Candles and matches:** For extended outages, candles can be used to conserve flashlight batteries. Remember, candles and matches are extremely combustible. Take extreme care when using them. Do not leave a candle burning unattended,

particularly when small children are present. Oil lamps also may be used. White-gas lanterns produce carbon monoxide gas, and should not be used in tightly closed rooms.

- **Battery-powered radio:** If the power outage is widespread or associated with other emergency situations, the radio may provide regular updates.
- **Emergency phone numbers:** Keep emergency phone numbers handy for reporting trouble.
- **Regular (cord) phone:** A cordless telephone cannot be used when there is no power to operate the transmitting unit. Make sure a regular phone that operates without electricity is connected in your home at all times.
- **Drinking water:** Fresh water may not always be available. Have at least one gallon of water for each person per day. Storing water in your freezer and thawing it as needed is a good way to keep water fresh. Store-bought water is also an alternative.
- **First-aid kit:** First-aid emergencies can occur at any time. Keep a first-aid kit handy for all emergencies.

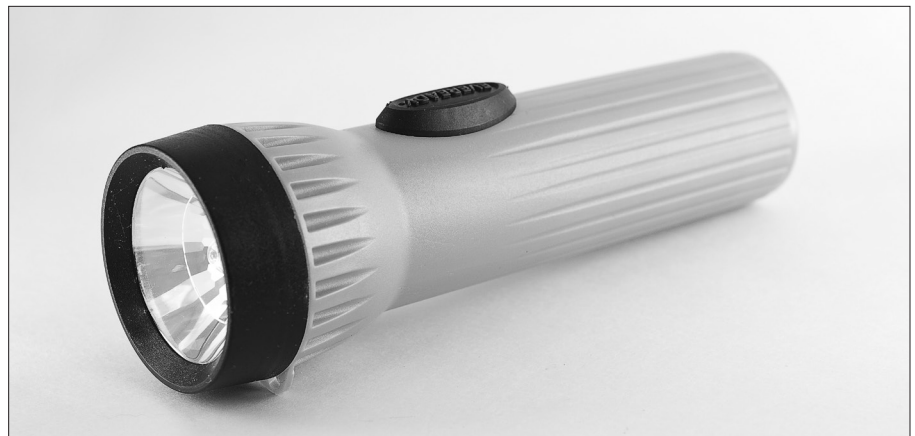
• **Blankets, sleeping bags and warm clothes:** Staying warm is essential. If you are without heat for an extended period, it may be necessary to bundle up to stay warm.

• **Non-perishable foods and manual can opener:** Some outages can be lengthy and it may not be possible to keep perishable foods fresh. Canned and dry foods are good to have on hand.

• **Cooler for frequently used foods:** If kept closed, refrigerators and freezers can preserve food for up to 24 hours. If opened, however, the cold air escapes. Use a cooler for storing water, drinks and frequently used food items. This allows the refrigerator/freezer to stay cold longer.

• **Ample firewood or fuel supply:** If you use a woodstove, fireplace or stove burning propane or oil, keep an ample supply of fuel handy during the winter. As a precaution, make sure your stove will operate properly without electricity. Forced-air furnaces will not, as they use electricity for the fan to circulate the heat.

• **Properly installed generator (optional):** A portable generator is an optional source of electricity during a



Take the first step toward being prepared for a power outage by assembling an emergency kit. Include such items as batteries, a flashlight, waterproof matches and bottled water in your kit.

power outage. However, a generator can cause serious injury or death if not connected and used properly. Use appliances that directly plug into the generator. If the generator is connected to the electric panel, a transfer switch and state electrical inspection are required. Otherwise, the generator could backfeed into the utility electric system, energizing supposedly dead wires and creating a deadly danger to linemen working to restore power.

### Reporting an Outage

When a power outage occurs, customer cooperation in reporting it greatly aids line crews in identifying the extent of the trouble and making repairs. Following are some helpful tips when reporting an outage:

- **Check breakers and fuses in your own home to make sure they are not tripped or blown.** Overloading the breakers and/or fuses can cause a power outage on the customer's side of the meter. A simple breaker/fuse check can avoid a trouble call and a possible service charge to the customer if the outage is caused by a problem in his or her own home, such as an obvious tripped breaker or blown fuse.

- **Check to see if your neighbor has power and/or your yard light is on at night.** This can help you determine if the outage is limited to your service, or if it also affects other customers on the system.

### Call KPUD's Outage Line

Once you have determined the power outage is in the utility system, use one of the following outage phone numbers for reporting:

- Goldendale 773-5891(local) or (800) 548-8357 (toll-free)
- White Salmon 493-2255 (local) or (800) 548-8358 (toll-free)

When you contact a Klickitat PUD representative, be patient, courteous and prepared to give the following information:

- Your name and phone number
- The name on the account

- Service address and description (ie. house, pump, business)

Knowing your account number and meter number also will aid line crews in promptly locating your service.

If you hear an explosion or see a flash of light when the power goes out, it is a good indication a fuse has blown. It is important to pass this information along to the KPUD representative.

Reporting a downed power line, trees in the line or other obvious problems will help crews pinpoint and repair outages.

Do not approach a fallen tree, or attempt to clear trees from a line. These actions can be fatal. KPUD line crews are professionals, with the training and equipment to handle these problems. Never try to do this work yourself.

### After-Hours Calls

When a customer reports an outage after hours and on weekends, the phone call is answered by an answering service for KPUD. These dispatchers can contact KPUD crew and direct repairs, as well as track outages on mapping software to speed up crews trying to locate problems.

If it is a major outage, a Klickitat PUD employee will come in to handle the outage. We have the ability to handle multiple incoming calls, and update customers on outage information due to increased communication with the line crews.

### When the Lights Come Back On

Before the lights come on, a customer should be ready to perform the following tasks:

- **Unplug voltage-sensitive equipment.** Switching surges can occur when power is restored. It is a good precaution to unplug sensitive equipment such as computers, televisions and stereo equipment from the house plug after you have reported a power outage. This will isolate your equipment from possible voltage surges and dips that are caused by utility equipment operations. Leave these items unplugged for several minutes after the



power is restored to ensure the problem has been repaired.

- **Turn on outside lights.** To help line crews working at night, turn on outside lights so they can see when power has been restored at your residence. This can cut down on the time it takes line crews to confirm a tap line to your house is re-energized.

For more information about power outages, call Klickitat PUD at (509) 773-5891, and ask for the operations department. ■