



## **PREPARING FOR A POWER OUTAGE AT HOME**

Energy is in short supply in California, so rotating outages are a real possibility. Here's what you can do:

### **Be prepared**

- Conserve where you can. Cutting your energy consumption will reduce the overall statewide demand for electricity. Ask for Pacific Gas and Electric Company's energy-saving tips at 1-800-933-9555 or visit our website at [www.pge.com](http://www.pge.com).
- Know your rotating outage block number, located in the lower left-hand portion of your bill.
- You may not have any notice before an outage occurs; stay tuned to local news for the latest information. Rotating outages can last up to two hours.
- Keep emergency supplies on hand, including:
  - ✓ Flashlights with fresh batteries
  - ✓ A portable, battery-powered radio
  - ✓ A wind-up or battery-powered clock
  - ✓ Water and nonperishable food
  - ✓ A manual can opener
- Assist family members or neighbors who may be vulnerable if exposed to high temperatures for extended periods.
- Have either a cell phone or hardwire, single-line telephone. Cordless phones will not work without electricity.
- Know how to manually open and close any electric garage doors, security doors or gates.
- Protect sensitive electric equipment, such as computers, VCRs and televisions, by installing surge suppressors or other power protection devices.
- Make sure your smoke alarms have fresh batteries. Even those alarms that are wired to your home's electrical system should have a fresh back-up battery.
- Have an emergency plan in place, including back-up power supply, if a member of your household depends on life support or needs other medical equipment. This applies to all power outages.
- Identify the operating requirements of gas equipment. During an outage, appliances with electronic ignitions will not work because electricity is needed to ignite the natural gas. In addition, appliances requiring fans or other electric devices to run (such as central heating units and gas clothes dryers) won't operate.

### **Before a rotating outage**

- Shut off sensitive electronic equipment such as computers and fax machines.
- Leave one light fixture on so you know when power is restored.
- Turn off any heat-producing electric equipment such as toaster ovens, electric stove tops, irons or hair curlers.
- Stay out of elevators – use the stairs instead.



### **During an outage**

- Do not call 9-1-1 to ask about the power outage. Listen to the news radio stations in your area for updates.
- Use extreme caution when driving. If traffic signals are out, treat them as a stop sign – come to a complete stop at every intersection and look before you proceed. Let the person on the right have the right-of-way.
- Use flashlights instead of candles to reduce fire hazards.
- Keep your refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to prevent food spoilage. Food should stay frozen for about one full day, and fresh in the refrigerator for about four hours.
- Turn off major electric appliances that were on when the power went off. This will help to prevent power surges when electricity is restored.

### **After an outage**

- Wait a few minutes before turning on major electric appliances. This will help eliminate problems that could occur if there's a sharp increase in demand immediately after power is restored.
- If you think that electric power has been restored to your area but your home is still without power, call Pacific Gas and Electric Company at 1-800-743-5000 for information.

### **Portable and standby generators**

Although a portable generator can be a valuable tool, it can also be very dangerous if not installed or used correctly. Here are some tips:

- If you use a stand-by generator, be sure that it's installed safely and call us to let us know you have one. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions to avoid injuring someone or damaging your generator or appliances. Call us at 1-800-743-5000 to report that you have a generator at your home.
- Never plug a generator directly into any electric outlets. Generators can feed electricity back into the power lines, putting you and our line workers in danger.
- If you plan to purchase or install a portable generator, call us for a *Facts You Should Know About Portable Electric Generators* fact sheet, and our *Standby Electric Generator Safety* brochure.

*To find out more about preparing for power outages and outage safety, visit Pacific Gas and Electric Company's website at [www.pge.com/outagesafety](http://www.pge.com/outagesafety) or call 1-800-743-5000.*