

# Emergency Preparedness for Natural Disasters and Planned Power Outages

## Food & Water

To keep your food supply, use coolers or keep your refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible. Surround your food with ice. Consider buying some food that can't spoil such as canned meats, fruits, or vegetables, or peanut butter and jelly with bread and a bottled water supply. Be sure you have a manual can opener.

## Lighting

Have plenty of flashlights with fresh batteries; do not use candles during a power outage as this poses an extreme risk of fire.

## Heating / Cooling

Have a plan to heat or cool your home. You can wear warm clothing and blankets in the cooler weather and use cold cloths to cool your body (back of neck, forehead, wrists) in the warmer weather. If the weather is very hot, or very cold, go to a location with air conditioning or heat; your county may set up temporary shelters for this purpose. Do not use a stove or outdoor stove to heat your home.

## Communication

Stay connected and alert by signing up for alert systems and apps for text alerts. Keep your cell phone charged.

## Medicines

Always keep a 7-day supply of your medications, including those medications you only take as needed. Make sure to check expiration dates.

**Insulin:** Insulin needs to be kept cold, between 36 – 46°F. If you are using ice to keep your insulin cold, be sure not to freeze the insulin. Do not use insulin that has been frozen. Under emergency conditions, you might still need to use insulin that has been stored above 86°F. When properly stored insulin becomes available again, the insulin vials that have been exposed to these extreme conditions should be thrown away and replaced as soon as possible.

Diabetes Disaster Response Coalition – Safe Storage of Insulin: <https://diabetes.org/sites/default/files/2023-10/ddrc-storing-insulin-2018.pdf>

**IF YOU HAVE NO WAY TO POWER YOUR LIFE-SUSTAINING MEDICAL EQUIPMENT, PLEASE GO TO THE NEAREST EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT OR CALL 911!**

## Hearing Aids

Make sure you have a 7-day supply of hearing aid batteries on hand.

## Motorized Wheelchairs & Scooters

If you use a motorized wheelchair or scooter, consider having a light-weight manual wheelchair available for emergency use.

**If you use electrically powered life-sustaining medical equipment (e.g., home dialysis, suction, breathing machines like oxygen, CPAP, ventilators, etc.) please contact your utility supplier:**

## Xcel Energy

Sign up for power outage notifications from Xcel Energy at 1-800-895-1999; you can receive notifications through your email on file with Xcel, a text message, or a phone call. In the State of Colorado, there is no priority list for advanced notification.

If you are having trouble paying your bill, and have received a disconnect notice, please visit the Xcel website at <https://co.my.xcelenergy.com/s/billing-payment/energy-assistance/medical-exemption-program> or call Sabrina Padilla at the Chronic Care Collaborative – Energy Program at 303-993-5056.

## Water Utilities

Please contact your water/utility company about your need for life-supporting devices before a power outage happens.

## Medical Equipment

Before a planned outage, please talk to your equipment supplier about how to get back-up oxygen when the power is out.

**Oxygen:** Have enough e-tanks (cylinders) for 48 hours of oxygen use on hand. If you need more tanks, please call your oxygen provider as soon as you know there is going to be an outage. Do not use candles for lighting your home; use flashlights.

**Ventilation:** Be sure to have a hand-held resuscitation bag available.

**Evacuation:** Plan to stay at the home of a family member or friend who is not impacted by the power outage. Or, if you can afford it, make a reservation at a hotel in an area that is not impacted by the power outage.

**Generator:** Get advice from a professional, such as an electrician, before buying a generator as you want to be sure that the generator you buy is rated for the power that you think you will need. Plug the equipment directly into the outlets on the generator; do not connect the generator to your home's electrical system. Place your portable generator in a well-ventilated area, away from windows. If you are part of Colorado's Medicaid Program, you might be eligible for a generator through the Home Modification Benefit:

<https://hcpf.colorado.gov/home-modification-benefit#:~:text=Home%20Modification%2C%20adaptations%2C%20or%20improvements,year%20life%20of%20the%20waiver.>

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## Resources

### **Red Cross Power Outage Checklist:**

[https://www.redcross.org/content/dam/redcross/atg/PDF\\_s/Preparedness\\_Disaster\\_Recovery/Disaster\\_Preparedness/Power\\_Outage/PowerOutage.pdf](https://www.redcross.org/content/dam/redcross/atg/PDF_s/Preparedness_Disaster_Recovery/Disaster_Preparedness/Power_Outage/PowerOutage.pdf)

### **Red Cross Power Outage Safety:**

[https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/power-outage.html?srsId=AfmBOoo46KkB-Cg\\_dMjNpM4YzIKyzIDRA3cDQ68rZvKlgzLttUJkmtKC](https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/power-outage.html?srsId=AfmBOoo46KkB-Cg_dMjNpM4YzIKyzIDRA3cDQ68rZvKlgzLttUJkmtKC)

### **Xcel Energy Outage and Safety**

<https://co.my.xcelenergy.com/s/outage-safety>

### **Xcel Energy - Be prepared and stay informed ahead of severe weather:**

<https://co.my.xcelenergy.com/s/about/newsroom/press-release/be-prepared-and-stay-informed-ahead-of-severe-weather-MCXYUZCBEDNVADTG6T2NBL3AHGBU>

### **Ready – Official website of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security - Power Outages:**

<https://www.ready.gov/power-outages>

**Americans with Disabilities Act National Network** - Emergency Power Planning for People Who Use Electricity and Battery-Dependent Assistive Technology and Medical Devices: <https://adata.org/factsheet/emergency-power>