

ELECTRICAL POWER OUTAGES - HEALTH AND SAFETY TIPS

Power outages may occur from a number of natural disasters (tornadoes, icestorms, power demands during high heat periods) as well as from man-made emergencies (accidents, equipment failures, fuel shortages). When power outages occur, a number of situations may develop which can present public health dangers.

The following recommendations are provided to avoid potential safety and health concerns that may occur as a result of an electrical power outage or interruption to your home. If you have any questions please contact your local utility or local health department immediately.

- 1) An electrical power outage or interruption may cause operational problems with your furnace. If your furnace is not operating be careful of hazards which can occur from alternative heating sources. **Do Not** use alternative heating sources such as space heaters, grills, and other appliances that can give off dangerous gases. These appliances must be properly vented. **Carbon Monoxide is a concern. The use and ventilation of portable power generators must be carefully monitored.**
- 2) If you use electrical heaters powered by portable generators be careful where you place the heater and do not leave the heater unattended.
- 3) If you use your fireplace for heating be sure that flues are open as required. **Do not overload your fireplace.**
- 4) If you leave your house for an alternative shelter leave a faucet at the end of you water service line on so a trickle of water is coming out of the faucet. This should prevent your water line from freezing in the event that a long term power outage may cause pipes to freeze.
- 5) If you leave your house remember to take your identification, any medications or special diet supplements with you.
- 6) If you know of people that are out of town, please contact the local authorities. These homes should be checked for pets, etc.
- 7) If you leave your house be sure and let relatives know where you are going and how you may be contacted.
- 8) Make sure that any stoves supplied by natural gas or propane are turned off before you leave.
- 9) When you return to your home be careful restarting appliances. If in doubt, call your local gas utility.