

# Weathering Storm Emergencies

- >> **When storms strike, NYSEG and RG&E are ready to restore power.**
- >> **You should be prepared too. Here are a few tips.**

We have all witnessed the devastating effects of storms in our part of New York State. Lightning, sleet, ice and strong winds attack electric equipment and facilities during these storms, and suddenly power is interrupted.

We know that life without electricity is inconvenient. We've prepared this information to help you weather storm emergencies and unplanned power interruptions. When there is an emergency, we truly appreciate your patience while we diligently make repairs.

## Before a Storm Strikes

Preparation makes life easier during power interruptions. If a severe storm has been forecast, consider these suggestions:

- Have flashlights, a battery-operated radio or television and fresh batteries handy.
- If you must use candles, please be careful and keep them far away from children and flammable materials.
- Store adequate supplies of non-perishable food that need not be refrigerated. Make sure you have a manual can opener.
- Have bottled water for drinking and cooking.
- If an electric pump supplies your water, fill bathtubs and other containers to ensure there is adequate water for washing and toilets.
- Set freezer and refrigerator controls to their coldest setting to extend the length of time the food will keep.
- Unplug sensitive electronic equipment – televisions, microwave ovens and computers – that could be damaged by lightning or sudden power surges.
- Have a working telephone. **Note:** Cordless and digital phones will probably not work during a power interruption. Ensure your cell phone is fully charged.
- Know how to manually operate your garage door if you have an electric garage door opener.
- **If someone in your home depends on life-sustaining equipment powered by electricity, call us now.** It's your responsibility to provide an emergency power source during any unplanned power interruption. You should also have a back-up evacuation plan.
- If you're considering an emergency generator, get our emergency generator safety information by visiting our website or calling us. Improperly connected generators can be dangerous for you, your family and our line crews. Learn more on page 2.

## When storms strike, NYSEG and RG&E are

**ready.** Our trained crews, on 24-hour standby, respond quickly to any electrical emergency. We have plans and priorities for restoring electricity service safely and efficiently.

Safety for our crews, our customers, and the community is paramount when it comes to restoring power. Our first priority in responding to a power interruption is removing hazards – such as live, fallen power lines – to ensure your safety. We then repair our main facilities that bring electricity to your neighborhood. Next, we work on our local delivery system, including the poles and power lines along streets and roads. We focus first on critical facilities such as hospitals, nursing homes, and fire and power stations. We also focus on areas where we have customers who depend on electrically operated, life-sustaining equipment. Overall it's a time-proven process that ensures we restore your service as quickly, efficiently and safely as possible.



## If Your Power Is Interrupted

- Check with your neighbors to see if their power is out. If it isn't, double check your own circuit breakers or fuse box to ensure you haven't simply blown a fuse or tripped a breaker.
- If power is out to your neighborhood, call us.
- Listen to the radio for weather and news updates. (If you don't have a battery-powered radio, briefly use your car radio.)
- Turn off all major appliances, such as air conditioners, electric water heaters, water pumps, refrigerators and freezers. Otherwise circuits may overload when our repair crews restore your service. Some appliances have "off" settings or need to be unplugged. You can turn others off by removing the proper fuse or turning off the correct circuit breaker. Leave a light turned on so that you will know when power is restored.
- Avoid "peeking" into your refrigerator or freezer. If the door is kept shut, food will stay cold or frozen longer.
- **Stay far away and tell others to stay away from downed power lines.** Even lines that look harmless may be extremely dangerous. Call us immediately to report any downed lines.
- **NEVER enter a flooded basement.** Call us immediately about what must be done to safely restore service to your home, don't ever attempt to do it yourself.
- We are responsible for repairs from the utility pole to the connection at your home. You are responsible for any repairs from the connection to the meter. If you suspect damage between the connection and the meter, call a licensed electrician so that repairs can be made before our crews attempt to restore your service.

### If your power is interrupted in the winter:

- **NEVER use a natural gas oven for heating and never use charcoal indoors for cooking or heating.** In either case, carbon monoxide poisoning could occur.
- During an extended power interruption, stay at another location (with a relative, friend, or neighbor who has electricity). You may want to consider going to a hotel or an emergency shelter.
- To avoid hypothermia, wear layers of clothes and a hat. Use blankets. Hypothermia, caused by exposure to cold, lowers your body temperature and can seriously threaten your health. Infants and the elderly are especially at risk. Warning signs of hypothermia include slurred speech, drowsiness and disorientation.

- **If you use an alternate-heating source, such as a fireplace, wood stove or kerosene heater, be sure to provide adequate ventilation.** Otherwise, carbon monoxide poisoning could occur.
- NEVER burn trash or plastic. Burn only seasoned wood in a fireplace.
- Use a fireplace screen. Keep the damper open.
- Shut doors to unused rooms and close the drapes to retain heat.
- Let water trickle from faucets to avoid frozen or burst pipes.
- Clear snow and ice away from dryer and other appliance vents.
- Check on your neighbors, especially if they are elderly and live alone.

### If you use a generator:

- Operate your generator outdoors in a clean, dry, well-ventilated area, and never indoors or in a garage.
- Make sure all electrical connections comply with National Electric Code.
- Never connect a generator to an existing wiring system without an automatic transfer switch.
- Never overload your generator with too many appliances.
- Never let children play near a generator.
- Read our *Emergency Generator Safety* brochure at [nyseg.com](http://nyseg.com) or [rge.com](http://rge.com), click on "Usage and Safety," "Electrical Safety" and then on "Generator Safety."

## After Our Repair Crews Restore Your Power

Once your service has been restored, you should:

- Turn appliances on one at a time to avoid overloading your circuits.
- Reset your refrigerator and freezer controls to normal.
- Replenish your home's emergency supplies.

If your neighbors get their power back, but you don't, call us to report it.

As power is restored, it may take some time for our system to return to normal. Trees weakened by the storm may fall resulting in additional power interruptions.

## Important Contact Information



**Electricity interruptions  
or emergencies: 1.800.572.1131**  
(24 hours a day, every day)

**Natural gas odors  
or emergencies: 1.800.572.1121**  
(24 hours a day, every day)

**Hearing- and speech-impaired:**  
Dial **711** (New York Relay Service)

**Website: [nyseg.com/outages](http://nyseg.com/outages)**



**Electricity interruptions  
or emergencies: 1.800.743.1701**  
(24 hours a day, every day)

**Natural gas odors  
or emergencies: 1.800.743.1702**  
(24 hours a day, every day)

**Hearing- and speech-impaired:**  
**1.800.962.3293**

**Website: [rge.com/outages](http://rge.com/outages)**