

Winter Preparedness



Winter is here and we want to focus on winter preparedness as this is the time of year that most outages occur due to snow, ice, and wind. Some members have generators that are permanent and kick on when the power goes out with enough gusto to power an entire house, however, these are costly. Other members opt for a portable generator meant to power some household items such as a refrigerator, pumps (well, septic), furnace—whichever items the member chooses to power. While portable generators are less expensive, there is still a financial barrier for some due to the cost of the generator and the installation.

Back in September, on a beautiful, blue-skied day, we had an outage that affected 1,225 members due to a busy beaver that chewed through a tree causing the tree to fall on the powerlines. While we were fielding calls about the outage here at the office, many members were saying, "I had to drive 15 minutes to get cell service to call you."

There is another option that may not be as robust as a generator to power items such as a refrigerator for extended periods of time, however, you could plug your modem and router into an **Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS)** that would give you wi-fi to call us, look for outage status updates on Facebook (Username: Delaware County Electric Cooperative), and communicate to family you want to notify that the power is out.

Available for on-line order, a **UPS** can start at around \$50 and, like anything in this world, could run up into the thousands, so there are options for varying budgets. Many members don't know these exist, so you will be hearing DCEC spreading the word at how effective an instrument a **UPS** can be at enabling communication during an outage. More than a surge protector, a **UPS** is essentially a battery backup that you can connect your wi-fi router and modem to.

In the event of a power outage (provided internet has not gone out as well), your cell phone (or laptop) can still run for a window of time on wi-fi allowing you to:

- Call **(607)746-9283** to report the outage
- Report outage through **SmartHub**
- Log onto Facebook/Instagram to see updates on the status of the outage
- Log onto www.dce.coop to view the Outage Map
- Communicate to family & friends

Safety Tips for Winter

1. Try to avoid using candles for lighting during a power outage. Instead use flashlights and other battery-powered lights which are not a potential fire hazard.
2. Make sure you have a good supply of flashlights, batteries, and other such supplies in case of emergency.
3. When the power goes out, turn off any major appliances, leaving only a light or two in the "on" position to act as a signal for when the power returns. Larger appliances left on can cause an over-load.
4. When disconnecting an electrical cord, pull from the plug, not the cord itself.
5. Make sure that your electrical devices are in good working order. Check for worn electric cords and broken switches. Broken or bent parts in a heater can cause fires and electrical shock.
6. Eliminate "octopus" connections. Plugging multiple cords into a single socket can overload the circuit and cause a fire.



Generate Safely.

Never use a portable generator indoors.

Do not plug generators into standard electrical outlets.

Use heavy-duty extension cords to connect appliances into the generator.

Start the generator before connecting appliances.

Residential Generators

WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE YOU BUY

INSTALLATION TYPE	PRICE	OPERATION ¹	CAPACITY	LENGTH OF OPERATION ³
permanent	expensive	automatic	whole house	can be indefinite
portable	more affordable	manual	typically partial ²	depends on fuel tank size



¹ Permanent generators start upon loss of grid power. They also exercise themselves automatically.
² Frequently powered: refrigerator, pumps (well, sump, septic), furnace, some lights, stove.
³ Permanent generators use propane or natural gas, portable use gasoline. Permanent models offer significantly longer operating times.

Image of portable generator provided by SafeElectricity.org

Generlink Transfer Switches available for purchase at our office



- * Plugs into 200 amp meter socket w/ 20 ft cord to connect to Generator
- * Built in surge protector
- * Accommodates 10,000 watt Generator

For more information or to confirm compatibility, call DCEC at (607)746-2341

A QUICK GUIDE TO GENERATORS

With proper use and maintenance, generators provide great convenience during a power outage. Before you purchase a generator, determine your backup power needs to select the right size. Make a list of essential appliances and devices you'll want to power during an outage, then total the required wattage.



RECOMMENDED IF YOU...

... rarely lose power.

Recreational Inverter

Up to 2,000 watts

Lightweight, about 60 pounds

Quiet, easy to store

Power: fridge and a few smaller items (i.e. lamp, phone charger and home security system)

Midsized Inverter

Up to 3,500 watts

Weighs up to 150 pounds

Power: fridge, laptop, five to 10 lights, phone charger, home security system and 10K BTU air conditioner

Portable Generators and Large Inverters

Up to 7,500 watts

Weighs about 300 pounds

Power: fridge, gas furnace, 10K BTU air conditioner, dishwasher, multiple lights, TV, laptop and more

Ability to connect to home's breaker panel

... occasionally lose power. Transfer switch required.

... frequently lose power. Transfer switch required.

Home Standby

Up to 20,000 watts

Must be permanently installed; starts automatically during outage

Power: nearly all home appliances and electronics (simultaneously)

Can run indefinitely on natural gas or propane

Recommended if you frequently lose power.

SAFETY FIRST!

- Let us know if you purchase a generator that you plan to connect to an electric panel.
- Improperly installed generators can create back feed, which is dangerous to our crews and the community. Before using the generator, disconnect the normal source of power coming into your home/business.
- Never operate a generator indoors or in an enclosed space.

Disclaimer: Please note safety requirements may differ based on the type of generator you purchase. Thoroughly read the operator's manual and know how to shut off the generator quickly.

Source: Consumer Reports

In the event of an outage, please call our outage line at **(607)746-9283** or report on-line through **SmartHub**.

Please remain calm and patient with our crew. We strive to keep your lights on and your home warm and our hard-working team will go the extra mile for our DCEC members! Happy winter!

If an outage is going to be long-term, get to a safe place with power, such as a family member or friend's house, or a nearby hotel or Red Cross facility that has electric service. If it's going to be a short-term interruption, you may be able to stay at home. If so, the following list of items may prove to be useful:

- fully-charged, battery powered lantern & flashlights
- extra blankets & winter weather clothing as the temperature in the house drops; sleeping bags are also a good option for a chilly house
- a gallon of potable water for each family member/day
- plenty of non-perishable food items for your family
- at least a 3-day supply of both over-the-counter medicines and prescription medications on hand at all times
- fully charged cell phone and devices at all times prior to a storm event; turn off the phones when not in use to preserve the battery power

YOUR POWER OUTAGE PANTRY

We do our best to avoid power outages, but unfortunately, Mother Nature occasionally has different plans. Stay ahead of the storm by stocking your pantry with a variety of non-perishable items.

Set these items aside for extended outages only, and your storm prep will be a breeze!

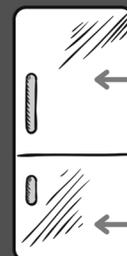
- BEANS
- CANNED FRUIT
- CANNED TUNA
- CANNED VEGETABLES
- CEREAL
- DRIED FRUITS
- DRIED MEATS/JERKY
- GRAHAM CRACKERS
- PASTA
- RICE
- SPAM
- OATMEAL



Don't forget to stock up on disposable goods, like paper plates, napkins, plastic cutlery and cups.

Keep Food Safe During and After a Power Outage

Refrigerated or frozen foods may not be safe to eat after a power outage. Use these tips to minimize food loss and reduce risk of illness.



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Refrigerated food will last four hours. After four hours, place refrigerated foods in a cooler with ice.

24 OR 48

Food in a half-full freezer will last 24 hours. Food in a full freezer will last 48 hours.

Food Safety Tips

1. Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible.
2. Throw out any food with an unusual odor, color or texture.
3. Throw out perishable food in your refrigerator after four hours without power or a cold source (like a cooler with ice).

When in doubt, throw it out!

