



THE POWER OUTAGE PREP CHECKLIST

Before the storm, a backup power worksheet, what to do while the lights are out, and how to recover. Print it and keep it on the fridge.

1 BEFORE THE STORM

- ☐ **Inventory what needs power:** fridge, freezer, sump or well pump, furnace blower, medical devices, router, phones.
- ☐ **Medical plan:** ask your provider about power-dependent devices and how long medicines keep at higher temperatures.
- ☐ **Flashlights for every household member**, plus spare batteries.
- ☐ **Battery-backed CO detectors** on every level of the home.
- ☐ **Charge everything:** phones, power banks, laptops, and your power station (store it per its manual).
- ☐ **Water and nonperishable food** for everyone, including pets.
- ☐ **Appliance thermometers** in the fridge and freezer.
- ☐ **Freeze water bottles or ice packs** and keep coolers handy.
- ☐ **Know whether your home phone works** without power, and how long its battery lasts.
- ☐ **Find local heating/cooling centers** and sign up for utility outage alerts.

2 BACKUP POWER WORKSHEET

Appliance (check the nameplate)	Running W	Starting W	Hours/day	Duty %	Wh/day = W × h × duty
e.g. Refrigerator (or use label kWh/yr ÷ 365)	150–400	800–1,200	24	~33%*	~1,100–2,200
Totals	Σ =	Largest extra start =			Σ =

Peak W = total running W + largest (starting – running) | Battery Wh = total Wh/day × days ÷ 0.85

Typical ranges: Champion Power Equipment generator wattage chart. *Duty % is an assumption; your fridge's EnergyGuide label is better. 0.85 = our stated inverter-efficiency assumption. Pick a power station whose rated output ≥ total running W, whose surge rating ≥ peak W, and whose capacity ≥ battery Wh, with some headroom.

SKIP THE ARITHMETIC

The free StormWatts runtime calculator does this math and shows which capacity tiers fit.

stormwatts.com/runtime-calculator

3 DURING THE OUTAGE

- ☐ **Keep the fridge and freezer closed.** A closed fridge keeps food safe for up to **4 hours**. A full freezer holds about **48 hours** (24 if half full).
- ☐ **Check temperatures.** Throw out perishables above **40°F for more than 2 hours**.
- ☐ **Unplug electronics and appliances** you aren't using, to avoid damage from surges when power returns.
- ☐ **Run essentials from your power station** and start big motors (fridge, pump) one at a time.
- ☐ **Track the battery %** and ration: lights and router first, comfort loads last.
- ☐ **Go to a community location with power** if heat or cold becomes extreme.

4 SAFETY BASICS

- ☐ **Gas generators, camp stoves, and grills: outdoors only**, at least **20 feet** from windows, doors, and attached garages. Let a generator cool before refueling.
- ☐ **Never heat your home with a gas stove or oven.** It raises your carbon monoxide risk.
- ☐ **Never backfeed** by plugging a generator or power station into a wall outlet. Hardwired loads need a transfer switch or inlet installed by a **licensed electrician**.
- ☐ **Use heavy-duty extension cords** rated for the load, and keep generators and cords dry.

Carbon monoxide is colorless and odorless. If a CO alarm sounds, get everyone outside to fresh air and call 911.

5 AFTER THE OUTAGE

- ☐ **When in doubt, throw it out:** food above 40°F for 2+ hours, or with an unusual odor, color, or texture.
- ☐ **Refrigerated medicine:** if power was out for more than a day, discard it unless the label says otherwise, and call your doctor or pharmacist.
- ☐ **Recharge your power station** and store it at the charge level its manual recommends.
- ☐ **Note what ran out first** and adjust your worksheet for next time.

6 IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Utility outage line		Doctor / pharmacy	
Local emergency management		Neighbor / family	
Electrician		Power station model & Wh	

Sizing a power station? Our guides cover how big a unit you need for a fridge, the four-step sizing method, solar panel compatibility, and cost per kWh across popular models: stormwatts.com/articles.