

## Be Ready for Extended Power Outages

Here in Lincoln County, wildfire is obviously a concern for many reasons. First and foremost is the concern for public safety and secondly is the concern about the damage a wildfire can directly cause to personal property. However, sometimes overlooked is the impact wildfires can have on the electric power system.

If an overhead power line is destroyed by a wildfire it can be days or weeks before power is restored.



### ***It's Time to Get Ready***

It is only a matter of time until you will experience an extended power outage. Be ready for this certainty by putting together an emergency preparedness kit. The American Red Cross indicates your kit should have:

- Water - One gallon per person, per day (3-day supply for evacuation, 2-week supply for home).
- Food - Non-perishable, easy-to prepare items (3-day supply for evacuation, 2-week supply for home).
- Flashlight – One for each household member (*Do not use candles during a power outage due to the extreme risk of fire*).
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio (NOAA Weather Radio, if possible).
- Extra batteries.
- First aid kit.
- Medications (7-day supply) and medical items.
- Multi-purpose tool.
- Sanitation and personal hygiene items.
- Copies of personal documents (medication list and pertinent medical information, deed/lease to home, birth certificates, insurance policies).
- Cell phone with auto DC chargers.
- Family and emergency contact information.
- Extra cash.

If someone in your home is dependent on electric-powered, life-sustaining equipment, remember to have a source of backup power. Also, it's always a good idea to re-fill your car's gas tank when it gets half empty. In an extended power outage, local gas stations may not be able to pump gas.

### ***What You Should do during a Power Outage***

First let us know your power is out by calling the office. Then keep food as safe as possible. Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible. An unopened refrigerator will keep

foods cold for about 4 hours. When it is time to eat, first use perishable foods from the refrigerator. Then use food from the freezer. A full freezer will keep the temperature for about 48 hours (24 hours if it is half full) if the door remains closed. Use your non-perishable foods and staples after using food from the refrigerator and freezer first. If it looks like the power outage will continue beyond a day, prepare a cooler with ice for your freezer items. Keep food in a dry, cool spot and keep it covered at all times.

As soon as possible after the power goes out, turn off and unplug all unnecessary electrical equipment, including sensitive electronics. Turn off or disconnect any appliances (like stoves), equipment or electronics you were using when the power went out. When power comes back on, surges or spikes can damage equipment. Leave one light turned on so you'll know when the power comes back on.



If you plan to use a generator during a power outage, think safety first. Improper use of a generator can put you and your family at risk and can put Lincoln County Power linemen in danger as well. Always remember that carbon monoxide kills. Never use a generator, grill, camp stove or other gasoline, propane, natural gas or charcoal-burning devices inside a home, garage, basement, crawlspace or any partially enclosed area.

Always remember, never touch any electrical power lines and keep your family away from them. Even though they are on the ground, they can still be energized.

### ***When the Power Comes Back On***

Any food that has been exposed to temperatures 40° F (4° C) for 2 hours or more or that has an unusual odor, color or texture should be thrown out. When in doubt, throw it out! Never taste food or rely on appearance or odor to determine its safety. Some foods may look and smell fine, but if they have been at room temperature too long, bacteria causing food-borne illnesses can start growing quickly. Some types of bacteria produce toxins that cannot be destroyed by cooking.

If food in the freezer is colder than 40° F and has ice crystals on it, you can refreeze it. If you are not sure food is cold enough, take its temperature with the food thermometer. Throw out any foods that have been exposed to temperatures higher than 40° F (4° C) for 2 hours or more, and any food that has an unusual odor, color or texture, or feels warm to touch.