**What should I do if I lose power?**

Safety tips for power outages

- Make sure you have at least one good flashlight with fresh batteries.
  - Better yet, make sure there's a flashlight on every floor of your house and one for each family member. If you don't have sufficient flashlights or batteries, add them to today's shopping list.
  - Make sure the batteries are fresh. Buy new ones every few months and reserve them for this use only, so they don't end up in toys or tools when you need them.
- Have a battery-operated radio ready.
  - If you don't already own one, purchase a battery-operated radio, and the appropriate batteries. Find a special place for the radio and flashlight so they will be easy to find in an outage. (Consider keeping them near the family first aid kit.)
  - If the outage is a lengthy one, or is associated with another emergency situation (extreme cold, dangerous storm, etc.), radio reports will be issued regularly.
- Keep emergency numbers posted near the telephone. Add the City Electric Department's number, 704-866-6823, to your list.
  - In a widespread outage, rely on radio broadcasts to learn more about the power outage. Before you call The Electric Department to report the outage, make sure you haven't blown a fuse or tripped a circuit breaker. Also look outside to see if your neighbors' lights are off. Be prepared to tell the City Electric Department if you heard any unusual sounds or can see any downed wires in the neighborhood.
- Remember, telephones with answering machines rely on electricity to operate.
  - Use a phone connected directly to the phone jack.
- Consider any downed power lines as deadly dangerous. Don't go near them. And don't let anyone else near them period. Report them at once to your City Electric Department or call 911.
- Keep the refrigerator door closed.
  - Food will keep for several hours in a closed refrigerator and up to two days in the freezer, again provided the door is shut. Rely on prepared foods from your shelf first. If you must prepare a meal with food from the refrigerator, get what you need quickly and close the door. Remember, you'll probably need your flashlight to see what you need.
- If the outage is not associated with an extreme emergency or storm, relax.
  - None of us are accustomed to life without electricity, but an evening without television may give you a rare opportunity to engage in some good old-fashioned storytelling (or catch up on your sleep).

**Tips for saving freezer food**

- Do not open the freezer until the power returns.
  - Each time you open and close the freezer, cold air escapes, thus raising the temperature inside.
  - A full freezer, if not opened, can keep foods safe for **two** days; a half-filled freezer will keep its contents safe for **one** day if not opened.
  - The larger the freezer, the longer the food will stay frozen.
- Cover the freezer until power returns.
  - Blankets or quilts placed over the freezer can conserve the cold. Make sure air-vent openings are not blocked; the power may return without warning.
- Do not eat frozen foods that show sheets of ice on the surface.
  - This means that the food had thawed and then has re-frozen.
  - Foods with a high water content stay frozen longer; meats and fruits do not thaw as quickly as bread and other baked goods.
- Do not re-freeze frozen foods that have thawed and are not refrigerator-cold.
  - Remember - when in doubt, throw it out. Discard perishable foods that are not refrigerator-cold.
  - Harmful bacteria may have multiplied during the thawing process.

    - Quality of the food often suffers when food is re-frozen.
- Handle fruits and vegetables as you do meat and poultry.
    - Many harmful bacteria can grow on fruits and vegetables as well as on animal products.
- Handle dry ice with caution.
    - Dry ice can help keep frozen foods cold during times of extended power loss. But take care. The extremely low temperature of dry ice can actually burn your skin; follow manufacturer's instructions closely and wear gloves when handling.
    - Dry ice should be placed on a piece of cardboard that sits on top of food in a freezer.