

Power cuts in the UK: a household plan

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A practical plan for updates, food, warmth, power, and medical equipment. The right plan is the one your household can understand, access, and maintain. Start with the items and contacts that matter most in your situation, then improve it a little at a time.

When the electricity stops, first check whether neighbours are affected and look for a message from your electricity network. Keep away from damaged cables and report an electrical hazard to the network operator. In Great Britain, 105 connects you to the local network operator for free. Save the number before you need it.

Keep a torch where you can find it in the dark. Use a battery or wind-up radio for local updates, and write down a station frequency. Charge phones when you can, then use battery saver and keep calls short. A power bank can help with a phone, but it is not a substitute for a planned supply for medical equipment.

Keep fridge and freezer doors closed. This slows warming, but it does not prove food is safe. Follow Food Standards Agency advice and discard food if you are unsure. Do not taste food to decide whether it is safe. Record when the outage started and use appliance guidance after power returns.

Keep warm with layers, blankets, and a room you can use together. Never use a barbecue, camping stove, or generator indoors or in an enclosed space because carbon monoxide can build up. Check alarms and follow the equipment maker's safety instructions.

If anyone uses powered medical equipment, contact their healthcare team and supplier before an outage. Ask what backup options suit the exact equipment, how long they last, and what to do if the backup fails. Do not connect equipment to an improvised power source. Ask your supplier or network about Priority Services Register support.

A practical household plan

Prepare the people in the home as well as the supplies. Agree one person to check for official updates and another to keep track of what has been used. If a household member needs support, write down the practical steps a helper should follow and

keep the information in a place they can access. Consider whether a neighbour or trusted relative can check in if travel or mobile coverage becomes difficult. Keep an alternative contact method, such as a landline or a written meeting point, if it suits your circumstances. When the electricity returns, wait for appliances to restart as their instructions advise. Check clocks, heating controls, and medical equipment settings rather than assuming they have kept their previous settings. Keep food safety in mind and do not use an appliance that may have been damaged by a surge or water. If you are unsure, ask a qualified repairer or the manufacturer.

Review the plan with your household

Choose a regular moment to look over the list together. A six-month review is easy to remember and matches the household checklist, but update the plan sooner when someone moves in, a baby changes feeding routine, a pet starts a new diet, or a health need changes. Check that everyone knows where the torch, radio, first aid kit, and written contacts are kept. Replace items that have been used, expired, or damaged. Confirm phone numbers and equipment instructions against current information. A plan can be short and still be useful when each person knows their part. If someone else may help, ask them to read the instructions before an incident and check that they can reach the supplies. Record only the information helpers need, store it safely, and update it when those needs change. A familiar routine can make a difficult day easier to manage.

Use the household kit builder to turn your household numbers into a checklist. It is a planning aid, not a substitute for local warnings, an individual care plan, or professional advice. Store essential information where the people who may need it can find it.

Frequently asked questions

What should I do first?

Start with the relevant official information for your area and the needs of the people or animals at home. Make a short written plan, gather what you already have, and fill gaps in stages.

How often should I review the plan?

Review it every six months and after a major change at home. Check dates, contact numbers, medicines, batteries, feeding needs, and any equipment instructions.

Where can I get urgent medical help?

Use NHS 111 or ask a pharmacist for non-life-threatening urgent advice. Call 999 for an emergency.

Sources

- [UK Government household advice](#)
- [UK Government emergency checklist](#)
- [Priority Services Register information](#)
- [Met Office warnings](#)
- [Flood warnings in England](#)
- [Sign up for flood warnings in England](#)
- [SEPA flood guidance](#)
- [Natural Resources Wales flood guidance](#)
- [Northern Ireland flood information](#)
- [Power cut help on 105](#)
- [British Red Cross emergency kit advice](#)

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