

Guide to Emergency Power Cuts / Rolling Power Blackouts

You may have heard about possible emergency power cuts / rolling power blackouts and feel unsure or concerned about what this might mean for you. National Grid has indicated that emergency power cuts are **unlikely to happen** this winter and would be a **worst-case scenario**.

As with any uncertain situation, it's always useful to have as much information as possible in order to understand the facts and be prepared, especially if you or someone you care for relies on electricity to power medical equipment or personal alarms / monitoring equipment.

What are Emergency Power Cuts?

Emergency Power Cuts would be used as a last resort if there was a major national energy shortage that could not be dealt with by a range of other measures and would mean that there isn't enough electricity to power every home and business in Britain at the same time

The power cuts would likely be implemented as 'rolling blackouts' lasting at least three hours each time, with different areas experiencing loss of power at different times. There may or may not be notice of these blackouts.

Be prepared – think about how you'd be impacted by lack of power

Medical equipment

If you don't know what would happen to any medical equipment in the event of a power cut, speak to your healthcare or equipment provider for advice.

Personal alarms / monitoring equipment

Without power your personal alarm or monitoring equipment may not work. Think about how you can raise an alarm should you need help – do you have a neighbour who could come and check on you in the event of a power outage?

Have emergency contact numbers on your mobile phone

It may be the case that your mobile phone doesn't work during a power outage, but it's still important to have a fully charged mobile phone and that important numbers are also stored on a notepad in case it runs out of battery.

Checking in on vulnerable neighbours or plan who will check in on you

If you have vulnerable neighbours, it is a good idea to check in on them in the event of a power outage. Likewise, you might feel reassured to make a plan in advance as to who will check on you.

Keep things handy

Know where you have a well-charged, or wind-up torch (candles are not a safe option). Know where you have a blanket and warm clothes.

Stairlifts

Stairlifts often have backup batteries, check with the manufacturer how long yours is expected to last. If you know in advance when you are going to be without power, ensure you have access to a ground floor exit.

Heating

If there is notice given about when power outages will take place, prepare to keep warm. You could microwave a wheat bag in advance, and ensure you have blankets and warm clothes to hand. It would also be good to prepare an insulated flask of hot water so that you can make hot drinks. If you have a log burner or fire, ensure you have sufficient fuel available and that they are safe to use. Even if you have gas heating it is unlikely to work without electricity.

Eating

You may be able to use a gas hob to heat food, but it may rely on electricity for ignition so it's a good idea to have a gas lighter to hand. It would also be a good idea to have easy food available that doesn't require heating.

Things to do

Most of us rely on the internet and television for things to do these days but these services would be unavailable in a power cut. You could use a battery powered radio, have some books or puzzles to hand, or you could find out about downloading some programmes or audiobooks to a tablet or computer.

Prepare & Share

Prepare – leave one light switched on, so you know when power returns. Turn off all other appliances.

Share – Share this information with others so that they can be prepared too.

Ensure you're on the Priority Services Register

If you are an older person and feel you are more vulnerable due to illness or disabilities, you can register with your energy provider to be on their PSR list. Contact them directly using the information on your bill. This will not stop you being affected by power cuts but will ensure partners such as local authorities and emergency services know where the most vulnerable members of communities are located, if there is a wider regional or national incident, or power cannot be restored as planned.

Find out your 'block letter'

You can find out your block letter in case you ever need it. This indicates where you are connected to the electricity network and might help you identify when you may have power outages. You'll find it at the top of your energy bill, or at www.powercut105.com/findoperator - should the power outages take place you'll also be able to find out your block number by calling **105**.

Watch out for scams

If you are unsure about a call you receive in relation to your power supply, then call your energy company direct or call the power cut helpline on **105**. **Never** make a payment in relation to a power cut over the phone.