

WHAT YOU CAN DO

TO STAY IN COMMUNICATION DURING A POWER OUTAGE

LEARNING ABOUT YOUR TELEPHONE SERVICE AND YOUR OPTIONS WILL HELP YOU STAY CONNECTED TO YOUR FAMILY AND ESSENTIAL SERVICES DURING AN OUTAGE OR EMERGENCY.

Know your voice service: do you need battery backup?

It is important to know what type of voice service you have. Traditional landline, Voice over Internet Protocol and Wireless service will function differently during a power outage. Your voice service may require electrical power from your home and/or battery backup to operate during an outage.

Knowing about your service before an outage or emergency will help you stay connected to your family and to essential services.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF PHONE SERVICE:

Traditional Landline Service: Will typically function in a power outage. If your phone equipment plugs into an electrical outlet, that equipment may not work during a power outage. Consider keeping a simple “corded” phone handy for use during a power outage. Test it in advance.

Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) Service: Requires electrical power at your home to operate. Know your battery backup system and consider keeping a simple “corded” phone handy for use during a power outage. Test it in advance.

Wireless Service: Length of use on fully charged battery varies. Keep extra, charged batteries or recharge with your car (in a well-ventilated place) or use a solar- or hand-powered charger.

TIPS:

- Know if your phone set requires power from your house
- Keep a non-cordless phone handy
- Help prevent outages – learn how to conserve energy

HOW TO PREPARE FOR AN OUTAGE OR EMERGENCY:

Emergency contact lists: Program “In Case of Emergency” contacts into your mobile phone with the label “ICE” so emergency personnel can contact those people for you if you are unable to use your phone. Print out a family contact sheet, including at least one out-of-area person as a contact point for family members.

Radio: Have a battery-powered radio available (with spare batteries).

Charged-up mobile phone: Get a mobile phone if you don’t already have one. Keep charged batteries and car-, solar- or hand-powered chargers available for your mobile phone.

Non-cordless phone: Keep at least one non-cordless phone in your house for use with either traditional landline or Voice over Internet Protocol service. Cordless phones usually have batteries in the handset but not in the base unit and therefore typically do not work in an outage.

Backup power: Make sure you have a battery backup system if applicable and that you understand how it works, which equipment it powers and the length of time it will function. Test it regularly. Consider a generator for your house and make sure your communications equipment is connected.

Sign-up for information: Know your electric utility’s power outage hotlines and websites. Subscribe to text alert services from local or state governments.

DURING A POWER OUTAGE OR EMERGENCY:

9-1-1: Call 9-1-1 for help when there are immediate threats to your life and property only. To help ensure a fast response: stay on the line and wait for the operator; do not hang up and redial; quickly state the emergency; and answer all questions asked.

2-1-1 and 3-1-1: In many areas you can call 2-1-1 for information about critical health and human services available and 3-1-1 for non-emergency calls to police and other government services.

Radio: Tune into broadcast radio for important news alerts.

Conserve wireless battery power: Limit calling and texting to emergency and urgent messages, reduce the brightness of your screen and close apps you are not using.

Texting and social media: If voice calls are not getting through, try using text messaging, e-mail, or social media instead to avoid tying up voice networks. You can also use social media to post your status. See, for example, the American Red Cross Safe and Well program.

Brief calls: If you need to use a phone, try to convey only vital information to emergency personnel and/or family. Provide information to your out-of-area family emergency contact, who can then share that information with others outside the emergency area.

Wireless calls: If you are unsuccessful in completing a call using your cell phone, wait ten seconds before redialing to help reduce network congestion.

Landline calls: To determine if a call can be placed on a traditional landline, listen for the following:

- Normal dial tone: place your call
- Silence: wait for dial tone; do not hang up as it will further delay your call
- Fast busy signal (twice as fast): try again later
- A recording: it will repeat that all circuits are busy; try again later

KNOW ABOUT YOUR POWER SERVICE:

Your electric utility provides information about planned, unplanned and rotating outages. Contact your electric utility for information. Many have online "Outage Centers" with additional resources.

Contact information for your electric utility can be found on your energy bill or in your phone book. More information about preparing for power outages is available at the California Energy Commission's Consumer Energy Center online: www.consumerenergycenter.org/index.html.

HELP PREVENT OUTAGES – LEARN HOW TO CONSERVE ENERGY:

You can help prevent power outages by learning more about conserving energy. To learn more about ways to reduce your energy usage, please visit: <http://www.flexalert.org>.