

Frequently Asked Questions & Answers: How to Prepare Your Business for PSOM Events

Q. How will businesses be able to conduct transactions with the power out?

A. Businesses should check with their Internet Service Provider (ISP) and Point of Sale (POS) company to see what they suggest. Businesses should also consider having more than one way to conduct transactions

Q. How much notice will people receive about planned outages?

A. The utility companies will try to provide 48 hours notice of pending power outages related to the weather. The best thing for customers to do is to sign-up for their utility's customer notification process at their website.

Q. I have a generator; can I just hook it up?

A. Generators that are installed as part of a home or business electrical system need to be permitted by the Town and utility company. If you are going to use extension cords, make sure they are rated appropriately for the intended usage. Generators should be placed outside to avoid carbon monoxide issues. Remember to take care when refueling and have a safe space cleared of flammable materials when running a generator.

Q. Is there a good way to keep food cold during an outage?

A. Make your own ice ahead of time. Freeze containers of water to keep food cold while power is off and place in the freezer and refrigerator. Try to keep the doors shut as much as possible. Ice chests and coolers will also keep food cold.

Q. What should I do about electrical devices that need charging?

A. Try to fully charge any device you may need during the outage. If possible, it is a good idea to unplug devices such as TV's, Computers, and other electrical devices while the power is off so a surge when the power is turned back on does not harm the devices.

Q: How can I minimize my business disruption?

A: Having a plan in case of a safety-related power outage can help minimize disruption, keep your employees safe, and protect equipment. Be sure to communicate your outage response plan with key employees. Remember, part of a good outage plan is having a good outage kit.

- Identify whether and how you could run your business without power. Think about how you'll complete transactions, keep employees and customers cool, power your lighting and ensure safety and security.
- Plan a manual alternative for work done on computers and cash registers.
- Ensure electronic door locks can be bypassed manually.
- If you have an emergency lighting system, make sure it is in good working order.
- Train your employees to know what to do if they are working when the power goes out, including shutting down sensitive equipment.
- Plan how you will let customers and employees know you are closing if the power goes out.
- Make a plan for caring for perishable inventory.

Q: Is there a way I can protect my equipment?

A: Power outages can affect equipment and data. Here's how to protect them both:

- Know how you will keep critical equipment running during an outage.
- Locate equipment power switches and turn off.
- Locate your electrical supply panels and know how to shut off power.
- Protect computers and other equipment from power surges with good quality surge protection.
- Prevent data loss with automatic backup programs and battery backup systems.

Q. I have a neighbor who is older (sick, younger, has health issues, lives alone, etc.), what can I do to help them?

A. Now is the time to check in on them and make sure they have a plan to deal with power outages. Make sure they are signed up with the utility provider's Medical Baseline program. During the outage, try to check on them and make sure they are doing ok.

Q. What can I do to plan for a planned power outage?

A. There are many things you can do, but now is the time to build a personal safety kit. Personal safety kits (similar to a Ready, Set, Go bag for wildfire) should contain:

- **First Aid Kit:** In addition to the usual items, also include prescription medications – check the expiration dates
- **Bottled Water:** Experts recommend a gallon per person per day
- **Flashlights & batteries:** Store them where you can easily find them – even when it's dark
- **Non-perishable food:** Choose items that don't require cooking or heating
- **Manual can opener**
- **Coolers or ice chests:** Have a few to store ice in case of a lengthy outage
- **Special-needs items:** This includes items for infants, the elderly, or the disabled
- **Battery-operated radio:** To access news reports
- **Fresh batteries:** For all battery-powered equipment
- **External rechargeable battery pack:** To charge cell phones and other electronic devices
- **Non-cordless phone:** To plug in during power outages