

Southern California Edison

Stay Safe

These tips can help you and your family stay safe in the event of a power outage.

- Always keep a flashlight and extra batteries handy. Never use candles in a power outage or other emergency.
- Turn off or disconnect any appliances or electronics you were using when the power went out.
- Leave one light turned on so you'll know when your power returns.
- Don't light a fire indoors. If you're cold, put on layers of warm clothing instead. Never burn charcoal for heating or cooking indoors.
- Leave the doors of your refrigerator and freezer closed to keep your food as fresh as possible. If you must eat food that was refrigerated or frozen, check it carefully for signs of spoilage.
- Using your flashlight, check throughout your home to see if any of your lights or appliances are working. If some things turn on normally, you may have blown a fuse or tripped a circuit breaker. Click here to find easy to use instructions for resetting [circuit breakers](#) or changing [fuses](#).
- If none of your lights work, check to see if your neighbor's power is out, too. This will help you determine if the electricity is out in your whole neighborhood, or just your home.
- If you see a power line or utility pole that has fallen, STAY AWAY. Live power lines can cause serious injury or even kill you. Visit [Power Line Safety](#) for more helpful tips.

It's especially important to stay calm in the event of a power outage. Frequently, power outages are caused by other hazards, such as extreme weather or emergency situations.

What Causes Power Outages?

Power outages can be caused by many things:

- **Storms.** Wind, heat, ice, and snow are the most common causes of widespread power outages.
- **Trees.** During high winds, or trimming by an untrained professional, limbs can come into contact with power lines, causing power interruptions. Visit [Tree Trimming](#) to learn more about safety issues and why planting trees near power lines is a bad idea.
- **Vehicles.** A vehicle accident with a utility pole can cause a power outage. Check out [Power Line Safety](#) for tips on handling these very dangerous situations.
- **Earthquakes.** Quakes of all sizes can damage electrical facilities and power lines.
- **Animals.** Squirrels, birds, and other small animals may cause power lines to short circuit.
- **Lightning.** When lightning strikes transmission towers, wires, and poles, outages occur.
- **Excavation Digging.** Sometimes underground cables are disturbed by digging. Check out [Call Before You Dig](#) and stay safe while gardening or placing fenceposts.
- **High Power Demand.** During heat waves and other times of unusually high power demand, overburdened electric cables, transformers, and other electrical equipment can melt and fail.