
Talking Points

Storm Safety Before and After

Before a storm:

- Assemble an emergency kit with flashlights, battery-powered communication devices, and the food, water, and medical needs of your family to survive prolonged power outages.
- Stay tuned to severe storm information from the National Weather Service, and be aware that lightning presents a danger 10 miles ahead of a storm front.

After a storm:

- Storm debris can hide dangers, such as downed or sagging power lines. Use caution in any cleanup effort. Any downed wires should be considered energized and potentially dangerous. Stay away, warn others to stay away, and call the utility.
- If power lines come down on or around your vehicle, call for help and remain in the vehicle. Do not attempt to get out until a utility lineman can assure you the power has been turned off.
- Do not use electric yard tools to clean up after a storm if it is raining or the ground is wet.
- Never step into a flooded basement if water could be covering electrical outlets or appliances that are plugged in.
- Do not attempt to shut power off at the breaker box if you must stand in water to do so. Stay out of flooded rooms and basements until you are assured the power has been cut off.
- Electric motors can be damaged when wet and should not be used after a storm until checked by a professional. Have damaged appliances repaired or replaced.
- Only use generators outdoors. Connect lights and appliances to the generator using extension cords. Do not connect directly to the home circuitry unless there is a transfer safety switch to isolate the power. Without that safety feature, electricity could “back feed” into the utility system, creating danger for anyone near lines, particularly utility crews working to restore power.

For more information and videos on electrical safety, visit www.SafeElectricity.org. Safe Electricity is a program of the Energy Education Council, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting electrical safety and energy efficiency, and supported by a coalition of hundreds of organizations, including electric utilities, educators and other entities committed to promoting safe use of electricity.

(See also “Generator Safety Talking Points” for more)

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