

Prepare your business for a power outage

This checklist can help you create a customized outage preparedness plan for your business.

Before an outage

1. KNOW YOUR BUILDING

- Identify the location of the electric meter room and electric service entrance in your building.
 - Make sure you have access to your meter room.
 - If you have more than one electric meter, identify which meter serves each part of your building, and the pieces of equipment that are connected to each meter.
- Identify the voltage levels that we deliver to your location.
- Consider an emergency lighting source for your meter room if there's a power outage.
 - Keep a flashlight, along with fresh batteries, in the meter room so you can see your equipment if the power goes out.
- Know the location and rating of your building's fuses. Keep two sets of spares in case a fuse blows when power is restored.

2. KNOW YOUR EQUIPMENT

- Post a one-line diagram, a simple drawing that shows the layout of the electrical network in the meter room of your building to help the people working to restore power.
- Develop a maintenance schedule to regularly check that your vault and electric equipment are working properly.
- Prepare a list of the equipment that will need to be turned off during an outage and reset when power is restored.
- Contact the service providers for your telephone service, security system and fire protection system for information on how these systems will operate during and after an electrical outage.
- Know what equipment can and cannot be turned off during an outage. Develop a plan for controlled shut-down if needed.
- Install surge protection devices to protect sensitive electrical equipment. If you have three-phase equipment, install a protection device and know how to reset it after an outage has occurred.

3. HAVE A PLAN

- Prepare and document your tasks and responsibilities during a power outage. Have a plan for shutting down and restarting electrical equipment and appliances.
- Have someone on-site or on-call who is qualified to work on your electrical equipment.
- Establish a notification process and assign people to be responsible for handling emergencies after hours
- Develop a list of emergency phone numbers.
 - Include suppliers, electricians, contractors, elevator services, computer services, managers at your business, and BC Hydro: 1 800 BCHYDRO (1 800 224 9376) or *49376 on your mobile phone.
 - Post the list in the meter room and in other strategic locations for quick access when needed.
- Set up a safety committee. Appoint safety coordinators to provide information and direction to the employees in their work areas.

3. HAVE A PLAN

- Have a mobile phone or corded phone readily accessible. Cordless phones and your company's phone system may not work without electricity.
- Ensure all key staff members have mobile phones, and that everyone has a list of key phone numbers.
- Have a qualified electrician test the breakers to make sure they work and are not likely to break when repeatedly opened and closed.
- Put together and maintain an emergency kit. Include flashlights, a battery-powered radio, battery-powered clocks, extra batteries, and a copy of your emergency plan with key phone numbers.

4. PREPARE YOUR EMPLOYEES

- Educate employees on what to do if an outage occurs. Include information on:
 - Procedures for exiting the building safely.
 - Shutdown procedures for air conditioning or refrigeration equipment, alarm systems, and any other critical equipment or systems.
- Ensure that key staff know the procedure to report an outage, and have access to your building's BC Hydro account number or Site Location ID (SLID).
- Post your SLID and make it available to employees who may be responsible for reporting an outage. You can determine your SLID number, and download and print customized posters by logging into your account at bchydro.com and selecting Outage Resources.
- Have an emergency plan in place for employees who rely on medical equipment. This may include a back-up power supply or transportation to another facility.
- Provide flashlights to each department.
 - Don't use candles as they can be a fire hazard.
- Keep protective gloves and goggles on hand in case you need to switch breakers back on when power is restored.
- Be sure that your protective equipment meets WorkSafeBC Occupational Health & Safety regulations for the voltage levels in your facility.

5. CHECK YOUR BACK-UP SYSTEMS

- If you have a stand-by generator, know its make, capacity and delivery voltage.
- Have someone on-site or on-call who is qualified to work with your back-up system.
- Make sure all manufacturers' operating instructions are carefully followed.
- Check that all critical loads, including elevators and emergency lighting, are connected to your stand-by generator.
- Verify that your stand-by generation capacity is enough to handle the amount of electricity you'll need during an outage.
- Test your stand-by generator each month.
 - Include the switchgear and transfer switch in your test.
 - Remove potential hazards or hazardous materials away from your stand-by generator.
- Know how much fuel you have for the generator, and how long it will last during an outage.
 - Determine where you can get fuel in case you run out of supply.
 - Install a fuel inhibitor (gasoline and diesel fuels), and plan to use, replace or polish this fuel at least once a year.

5. CHECK YOUR BACK-UP SYSTEMS

- Test your back-up battery systems (Uninterruptible Power Supply or UPS, emergency lighting, phone, security, fire protection, etc.) each year.
- If you have a UPS system, know its back-up capacity (in minutes).
 - Update this information as you add or remove equipment.
 - Develop a plan for the orderly shutdown of equipment before the capacity limit is reached.

When the power goes off

- Check your circuit breakers or fuses to make sure that the outage is not being caused by equipment problems in your facility.
- Check to make sure employees are safe.
 - Check your elevators, equipment and the facility in general for situations that may need immediate attention.
- If the outage is in your own system, contact your electrician or electrical contractor.
- If it's a BC Hydro outage, call us at 1 800 BCHYDRO (1 800 224 9376), or *49376 on your mobile phone.
 - Visit our mobile website at bchydro.com/outages for up-to-date outage information.
- Turn off major pieces of equipment not connected to your stand-by generator. Some appliances or tools left on will start up automatically when service is restored. Turning them off can prevent damage, injury and fire.
 - Leave a few lights on in visible areas so you know when the power is restored.
- Go to the meter room and shut off the circuit breakers to the major pieces of equipment. This will help avoid power surges and possible damage to your equipment when the power is restored.
 - Leave the breakers on that control the lights to alert you when power is restored.
- Contact the companies that service your air conditioning system, alarm and communications equipment for information or specific instructions.

When power is restored

- Turn on the most essential equipment and wait 15 minutes before reconnecting other equipment to give the system a chance to stabilize.
- Close your circuit breakers one at a time.
 - Start with your non-critical, single-phase breakers first.
 - Wait a minute or two to make sure your equipment is operating before moving to the next breaker.
 - Turn on any three-phase equipment at the end of this process.
- Reset clocks, automatic timers and alarms.
- Shut down your stand-by generator and transfer load back to your electric system.
- Check and reload fuel for your stand-by generator.
- Review and update your outage plan based on insight and learnings gained from the outage.
- Meet with your safety committee to update procedures as necessary.
- Communicate and report what happened to all concerned.