

IN THE DARK; LIVING WITHOUT ELECTRICITY AFTER A STORM

When a hurricane or another natural disaster strikes, your electricity may be down for days or even weeks. To minimize the impact the loss of electricity has on your household, prepare in advance for life in the dark.

KITCHEN TIPS:

- Stock a two-week supply of non-perishable foods that do not require cooking:
 - ◇ Canned fruits and vegetables;
 - ◇ Canned juices, milk, powdered drinks;
 - ◇ High energy foods such as peanut butter, jelly, crackers, granola bars and trail bars;
 - ◇ Canned meat – tuna/chicken/turkey and chili;
 - ◇ Canned ravioli, soups, stew;
 - ◇ Dried fruit.
- Select canned items with a pull top to eliminate need of a can opener.
- Consider a French Roast Coffee Maker to

brew coffee on a grill.

- Stock trash bags in different sizes.
- Stock one gallon of water per day per person for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene.
- Store a can of sterno, camp stove, propane for grill for foods that need to be cooked (only use outdoors).
- Purchase a non-electric can opener.
- Consider using paper plates and utensils for easy disposal.
- Buy disinfectant wipes, bleach and towelettes.
- Collect single serving plastic containers with lids.
- Use a medium sized cooler to store ice.
- Avoid opening the refrigerator or freezer.

BATHROOM TIPS:

- Clean and bleach bathtubs – fill with water.

(Continued on page 2)



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- Place a bucket or gallon jug near toilet to fill for flushing.
- Stock wipes or hand sanitizer for washing and sanitizing.
- Place paper cups/towels in bathroom.

ALL ROOMS:

- Use battery operated lanterns and “stick on” lights for lighting in all rooms.
- Never use candles.
- Keep flashlights with batteries handy to walk from one area to another.
- Make sure you have a battery operated radio and possibly a television to keep informed.

GENERAL HINTS:

- Battery operated, handheld fans and lightweight, light colored clothing can help you remain cool if it is hot outside.
- Never run a generator inside or in the garage.
- Know how to operate the manual release lever on the electric garage door opener.
- Make sure all computer files are backed up.
- Turn off or disconnect any appliances you were using when the power went out.
- Make sure you have a telephone that does not rely on electricity.

Remember to keep a supply of cash on hand, especially dollar bills and coins, since ATM machines and “debit machines” will not be available and you will need cash for purchases like gas, food and other supplies after a hurricane hits.

You and your household can survive with no electricity if you plan ahead. Don't be caught in the dark without the necessary food, water and lighting needed to keep your family safe and secure.

Sources:

- *The Disaster Handbook*; UF/IFAS (<http://disaster.ifas.ufl.edu>)
- *Blackouts*; American Red Cross (www.redcross.org/services/disaster).

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