

# Customer Storm Preparedness and Safety Tips

- PG&E encourages customers to have a plan, prepare for power outages and above all else, stay safe.
- Customers can get updates on outages in their neighborhood through a variety of channels.
- Contact our outage information line at 1-800-743-5002
- Access our Electric Outage Map online at [pge.com](http://pge.com)
- Customers can also log-in to their account through [pge.com](http://pge.com) and sign up to receive proactive outage alerts through email, text or phone.
- **Never touch downed wires:** If you see a downed power line, assume it is energized and extremely dangerous. Do not touch or try to move it—and keep children and animals away. Report downed power lines immediately by calling 911 and by calling PG&E at 1-800-743-5002.
- **Use flashlights, not candles:** During a power outage, use battery-operated flashlights, and not candles, due to the risk of fire. If you must use candles, please keep them away from drapes, lampshades, animals and small children. Do not leave candles unattended.
- **Have a backup phone:** If you have a telephone system that requires electricity to work, such as a cordless phone or answering machine, plan to have a standard telephone or cellular phone ready as a backup.
- **Have fresh drinking water, ice:** Freeze plastic containers filled with water to make blocks of ice that can be placed in your refrigerator/freezer during an outage to prevent foods from spoiling. Blue Ice from your picnic cooler also works well in the freezer.
- **Secure outdoor furniture:** Deck furniture, lightweight yard structures and decorative lawn items should be secured as they can be blown by high winds and damage overhead power lines and property.
- **Use generators safely:** Customers with standby electric generators should make sure they are properly installed by a licensed electrician in a well-ventilated area. Improperly installed generators pose a significant danger to customers, as well as crews working on power lines. If using portable generators, be sure they are in a well-ventilated area.
- **Turn off appliances:** If you experience an outage, unplug or turn off all electrical appliances to avoid overloading circuits and to prevent fire hazards when power is restored. Simply leave a single lamp on to alert you when power returns. Turn your appliances back on one at a time when conditions return to normal.

- **Safely clean up:** After the storm has passed, be sure to safely clean up. Never touch downed wires and always call 8-1-1 or visit [811express.com](http://811express.com) at least two full business days before digging to have all underground utilities safely marked.

## Winter Driving

- Streetlights: At night, the streets will be much darker than usual and will look different. Follow all posted speed limits – or drive a bit slower. Use turn signals when changing lanes and especially at corners with crosswalks.
- Traffic Signals: If traffic signals are out or flashing red, come to a full stop at every intersection, and proceed as you would at a four-way stop.
- Keep emergency gear in your car when you're traveling in areas with snow and ice, including:
  - Cell phone
  - Flashlights
  - Jumper cables
  - Sand or kitty litter (for traction)
  - Ice scraper or snow brush
  - Blankets
  - Warning devices (such as flares or reflectors)

### **If your vehicle comes in contact with a downed power line:**

Stay inside! The safest place is in your car. The ground around your car may be energized.

- Honk the horn, roll down your window and yell for help.
- Warn others to stay away. Anyone who touches the equipment or ground around the vehicle may be injured.
- Use your mobile phone to call 911.
- Fire department, police and PG&E workers will tell you when it is safe to get out of the vehicle.

### **If there is a fire and you must exit a vehicle that has come in contact with downed power lines:**

- Remove loose items of clothing.
- Keep your hands at your sides and jump clear of the vehicle, so you are not touching the car when your feet hit the ground.

- Keep both feet close together and shuffle away from the vehicle without picking up your feet.

### **Gas Safety Tips (Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Prevention)**

- Customers who smell gas should vacate the premises immediately, call 9-1-1 and then PG&E at 1-800-743-5000.
- If you smell gas, do not use anything that could be a source of ignition, including candles, cell phones, flashlights, light switches, matches or vehicles, until you are a safe distance away.
- Never use cooking devices such as ovens or stoves for home heating purposes.
- Make sure water heaters and other natural gas appliances have proper ventilation.
- Never use products inside the home that generate dangerous levels of carbon monoxide, such as generators, outdoor grills or propane heaters.
- Install carbon monoxide detectors to warn when concentration levels are high.

### **Portable Generator Safety**

- Be sure that the power needs of the device (electric load) are supported by your generator and does not exceed the manufacturer's specifications.
- Position your generator where its exhaust can vent safely to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning and death.
- Only use extension cords that are properly sized for your generator to prevent overheating. The American Wire Gauge (AWG) chart can be utilized to determine which extension cord is right for you. AWG measures extension cord thickness; keep in mind that the thicker the cord, the smaller the AWG rating will be.
- Keep cords out of high-traffic areas so they don't present a tripping hazard.
- Never run cords under rugs or carpets where heat can be generated or where damage to a cord may go unnoticed.
- More information on electric generator safety is available on PG&E's website at [www.pge.com/backuppower](http://www.pge.com/backuppower).

### **Permanent-standby Generator Safety**

- Installation requires a licensed electric contractor or other qualified professional.
- Ensure electricity from your generator does not flow or "backfeed" into PG&E's power lines. The most common way to prevent backfeeding is to install a "double-pole, double-throw transfer switch" along with your permanent standby generator.
- Any additions or adjustments to your house wiring should be inspected by your city or county building department.

Once installation is complete, call PG&E at [1-800-743-5000](http://1-800-743-5000) to let us know about your backup system.