WHAT DO I DO WHEN THE POWER GOES OUT IN WINTER?

Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors shut, add layers and blankets, and move any generator, camp stove or grill outdoors. Ready.gov says to plan for several days without power in winter, and to keep carbon monoxide detectors with battery backup on every level of the home.

THE STEPS

01 Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed. A closed refrigerator keeps food cold for about four hours, and a full freezer for about 48 hours.

02 Put on layers and use a sleeping bag or blankets. Ready.gov lists a sleeping bag or blanket for each person in its basic kit.

03 Never heat the home with a gas stove or oven. Generators, camp stoves and charcoal grills belong outdoors only.

04 Place any generator outside, at least 20 feet from windows, doors and attached garages.

05 Check that carbon monoxide detectors with battery backup are on every level of the home.

06 Use a battery-powered or hand-crank radio, and a NOAA Weather Radio, to follow local updates.

07 In winter, plan for several days without power. A body temperature below 95 degrees is an emergency.

THE CHECKLIST

- ☐ Flashlights and extra batteries
- ☐ Sleeping bag or blanket for each person
- ☐ Battery or hand-crank radio
- ☐ CO detectors with battery backup
- ☐ Thermometer in the refrigerator
- ☐ Water and food that need no cooking

Sources: Ready.gov, Power Outages; Ready.gov, Winter Weather; Ready.gov, Build a Kit. Last reviewed November 17, 2026. General planning information, not medical, legal or financial advice.