# READY HOUSE: POWER OUTAGE

QUICK REFERENCE • FRONT • CASCADIA READY RADIO

## THE FIRST 15 MINUTES

do these in order

1. **Get light first.** Headlamps, not candles. Everyone gets their own.
2. **Is it just you?** Look at the neighbors' lights, then check your breaker panel.
3. **Report it** to your utility. Write down any time estimate they give you.
4. **Close the fridge and freezer.** The food clock has started (see right).
5. **Unplug electronics** to protect against a surge. Leave one lamp on so you know when power's back.
6. **Save your phone.** Low power mode, screen dim, text instead of calling.
7. **Check on people:** anyone who relies on medical equipment, older neighbors, anyone living alone.

## THE FOOD CLOCK

doors closed

| 4 h | 24 h | 48 h |
|---|---|---|
| Refrigerator | Half-full freezer | Full freezer |

- Every door opening speeds up the clock.
- Keep a **fridge thermometer** inside. At or below **40°F**, the food is safe.
- Frozen food that **still has ice crystals** can be refrozen or cooked.
- Long outage? About **50 lb of dry ice** keeps an 18 cu ft freezer cold for about 2 days. Handle it with gloves, and set it on top of packages, not touching food.

**When in doubt, throw it out. A bad guess costs more than the groceries.**

## CARBON MONOXIDE: THE RULE THAT NEVER BENDS

generators · grills · camp stoves · heaters

**Anything that burns fuel: outdoors only, at least 20 feet from windows, doors and vents. Never indoors, in a garage, basement, crawlspace or shed. Open windows do not make it safe.**

- Never heat with the **oven or stovetop**
- Never burn **charcoal** indoors, any amount
- Never run a **generator** in the garage
- Never idle a **car** in the garage, even with the door open
- Never use a **camp stove or grill** inside
- Never bring an **outdoor propane heater** inside

### SIGNS OF CO POISONING

Headache, dizziness, nausea, weakness, confusion. It feels like **the flu without a fever**, often in several people (or pets) at once.

**Get everyone outside now. Call 911.** Don't go back in until responders say it's safe.

**A battery CO alarm on every level** and outside every sleeping area. Test monthly.

## LIGHT & CHARGING

- **One headlamp per person**, plus a light for each room you use. It keeps both hands free.
- **Candles are not your main light**, especially with kids, pets, or any chance of a gas leak.
- Charge every **power bank once a month**, not the week a storm shows up. A 10,000 mAh bank charges a phone about 2 times.
- A car's **12-volt outlet** tops out around **150 watts**: enough for phones, a laptop or a CPAP, not a fridge. Run the engine **outside only**.

## STAYING WARM

- Pick **one warm room**: small, interior, few windows. Close it off; bring everyone and every blanket in.
- **Heat without power:** an inspected **wood stove**. A propane or kerosene heater only if **labeled for indoor use**, with a window cracked, and **never while anyone sleeps**.
- **Pipes** start to freeze around **20°F**. Drip the faucets and open the sink cabinets on outside walls.
- **Leaving?** Shut off and drain the water.
- Body temp **below 95°F** or signs of frostbite: get medical help.



From *The Ready House Bible* by Charlie Ramsey, Sections 4–6

# BACKUP POWER & YOUR PLAN

READY HOUSE: POWER OUTAGE • BACK

## SIZE IT RIGHT: LOADS BEFORE HARDWARE

list what must run, then buy for the biggest startup surge

**29 kWh**
whole house, per day

**5–10**
kWh/day, essentials only

- **Running watts:** what a device draws once it's on.
- **Starting watts:** the brief jolt when a motor kicks on. **Size for this**, or the pump won't start when you need it.
- **Order of priority:** medical devices → fridge → lights & phones → everything else.

| LOAD | RUNNING | STARTING |
|---|---|---|
| Refrigerator | **100–400 W** | **800–1,200 W** |
| Sump pump | **800–1,000 W** | **2,400–3,000 W** |
| Well pump (½ HP) | **~1,000 W** | **2,000–3,000 W** |
| Furnace blower (newer / older) | **60–300 / 400–1,200 W** | **1.5–2× running** |
| CPAP · LED lights · phone charging | **~60 · ~150 W** | — |

*Example: fridge + lights + phones + sump pump → a 3,500–5,000 W generator. Add a window AC → 5,000–7,500 W.*

## GENERATOR RULES

- **Outdoors, 20 ft from the house.** Every time.
- **Never plug it into a wall or dryer outlet** ("backfeeding"). It can kill line workers, start a fire, and it's illegal.
- To power house circuits, use an **interlock kit or transfer switch**, installed by a licensed electrician with a permit.
- Otherwise, plug appliances in directly with **outdoor-rated, 3-prong cords**. Don't chain cords together.
- **Refuel only when it's off and cooled.**
- Untreated gas goes bad in **1–3 months**; stabilizer: 12–24.
- **Run it under load for 15–30 minutes every month.** Check the oil every time.

## COOKING WITHOUT POWER

- **Camp stoves and grills: outdoors only**, under the 20-foot rule.
- The only flames OK indoors (with ventilation): **candle warmers, chafing dishes, fondue pots**, and only for warming, not cooking raw food.
- Test your stove **on a calm weekend**, not in the dark.

| COOK TO (FOOD THERMOMETER) | TEMP |
|---|---|
| Poultry | **165°F** |
| Ground meat | **160°F** |
| Whole beef, pork, lamb (+3 min rest) | **145°F** |

## DO THIS NOW

before the next outage

### TONIGHT

Charge every power bank in the house. Put a headlamp in every nightstand. Test your CO and smoke alarms.

### THIS WEEKEND

Write down your **5 must-run loads** with their watts. Medical devices first, then the fridge, then lights and phones.

### WHEN YOU'RE READY

Buy the **smallest thing that covers that list**. If it burns fuel, buy the CO alarms first.

## OUTAGE KIT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Headlamp per person
- ☐ Spare batteries (right sizes)
- ☐ LED lantern per main room
- ☐ Charged power banks
- ☐ Battery CO alarm, every level
- ☐ Fridge & freezer thermometers
- ☐ Battery or hand-crank weather radio
- ☐ Blankets & sleeping bags
- ☐ Cash in small bills
- ☐ Outdoor stove + fuel, tested
- ☐ Food that needs no cooking
- ☐ Utility's outage number, written down




**Want the whole plan?**

*The Ready House Bible* by Charlie Ramsey has the worksheets for sizing backup power, food storage and heating. Paperback and Kindle. General preparedness guidance. Always follow your utility, local officials and equipment manuals.