



Information to help plan for Power Outages



Our Energy Supply:
Information for people with disabilities

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Our Energy Supply

Introduction

We may see a rise in power outages during the coming winter months when energy demands increase.

The demand for electricity in Ireland has grown significantly in recent years due to population increase, an increase in data centers, and increase in the use of electric vehicles.

Ireland still relies heavily on gas and oil powered generators which will eventually shut down when we have progressed in the installation of renewable energy such as wind and solar power. This, coupled with world events has caused fuel prices to soar and has placed uncertainty around energy supply.

This booklet aims to provide some useful information, energy tips, and links to online sites with valuable information that we hope you will find helpful during the winter months if power outages occur.



How does this effect People with Disabilities?

Many people with disabilities are dependent on electric and battery powered equipment, assistive technology, and medical devices. Maintenance of a power supply for this group can be critical.



The NRH Accessibility Committee has produced this booklet to help you plan for these situations; there is also an **Emergency Power Planning Checklist** which includes checklists for planning essentials, life support devices, oxygen use, the use of generators, rechargeable batteries, mattresses, stair lifts, and through floor lifts.

Support Available

The Commission for Regulations of Utilities (CRU) has launched an initiative where all utility providers now must provide a **Vulnerable Customer Policy**. For anyone with specific needs, you can register with your Utility provider by logging on to their website, typing in Vulnerable Customer Registration and simply follow the instructions.

Registered customers will be given priority by ESB Networks in the event of power outages and will receive all the support available.

What to do if there is a Power Outage

In the event of a Power Outage, contact **ESB Networks** at

1800 372 999 or 021 2382410

Registered Vulnerable Customers will receive priority and will be answered by the next available Service advisor who will give updates on why the power has gone and how long it will take to restore.

In an emergency, it is advisable to have phone numbers for other local support agencies readily available or stored in the contacts of your mobile phone. For example, a close family member or friend, civil defense, fire brigade or local Gardaí. (See our Emergency Power Planning document)

Other useful tips in the event of a Power Outage*

- Turn off cookers, ovens, irons and any electrical appliances.
- Leave the light on so you know when power is restored
- Take extra care if using candles, oil lamps or other naked flames
- Test smoke alarms with fresh batteries
- Ensure adequate ventilation if using gas heaters – open a window.
- Keep a carbon monoxide alarm in the house if using open fires or gas heaters.

* (Ref ESB Vulnerable Customers Policy)

Ways to Keep Warm during a Power Outage

For those who depend on heat for body temperature regulation, it is important to have a back-up plan in case of power loss. There are many products available and by doing a search on Google for 'non electric heater', a wide range of options are available. Be sure to purchase from a reputable provider and ensure that the product:

- is suitable for indoor use
- is compact for easy storage
- has refills for gas easily available for future use.

Always be cautious when purchasing online.

Other useful tips to help you keep warm

- Eat well.
- Ensure you have a supply of warm blankets readily available and easily accessible.
- Have carefully chosen layers of clothing to keep you warm.
- Make sure your feet are warm; wear slippers or thick socks.
- Wear a scarf-style protector.
- Wear a hat.
- Take some exercise.
- Have a warm drink.
- Embrace the cardigan culture



Planning Ahead

The following are key items to consider when planning for a power outage, depending on your requirements, situation, product installation and affordability. These include:-

- Installing a backup generator.
- Installing an emergency lighting system.
- Use of battery powered systems such as power banks, Unprotected Power Supplies (UPS)
- Being familiar with your equipment capabilities and backup requirements. (The user guides should contain these details)

Refer also to the NRH **Emergency Power Planning Checklist**.

Useful Tips for Conserving Energy

To understand how and where best to save energy in the home, it is useful to know what items use the most energy. The following list gives an idea of the distribution of use.

- Air cooling and heating: 47% of energy use
- Water heater: 14% of energy use
- Clothes washer and dryer: 13% of energy use
- Lighting: 12% of energy use
- Refrigerator: 4% of energy use
- Electric oven: 3-4% of energy use
- TV, DVD, cable box: 3% of energy use
- Dishwasher: 2% of energy use
- Computer: 1% of energy use

Anything that heats or cools air uses most energy, as do electric showers, kettles and if used incorrectly, the fridge freezer. If we concentrate on these areas first, then as we become more energy aware, we are likely to make further changes.

Some Tips for Quick and Simple Changes

- Change all the light bulbs in your home for LED versions
- Only fill the kettle for the amount you will use and use it immediately. Don't keep re-boiling.



- Reduce time in the shower to 5 minutes.
- Ensure windows and blinds or curtains are closed before turning on heating.
- Switch off lights in rooms not in use.
- Turn off equipment such as TVs and computers at the switch when not in use.

- Try to keep your radiators free and uncovered by clothes or furniture.



- Try not to keep the fridge door open for any more than is necessary.
- Throw a tennis ball into the tumble dryer with a big load. It reduces the drying time 25%.
- Try use washing machines and dryers outside of peak time (5pm to 7.30pm)
- Keep your boiler well serviced and working to maximum efficiency.
- Reduce your heating thermostat by just 2 degrees for significant savings.

Reduce Your Use Campaign

The Government, in association with the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) and the Office of Public Works (OPW) have launched a campaign this winter to encourage everyone to reduce energy use.

The 'Reduce Your Use' campaign includes many useful hints and tips on how to save energy and as a result, save on energy charges in both the workplace and at home. By scanning the barcode below you can join the 'Home Energy Plan'. You will receive weekly e-mails with information on how to reduce your use and how to access grants available to future-proof your home and make it more energy efficient. You can also join this campaign by logging on to www.seai.ie/home-energy-plan



Home Energy Grants

As part of the overall strategy of the Climate Action Plan, public and private grants have been made available to everyone. The amount of the grants available depends on the amount of carbon emissions that could be reduced as a result of your submission or project. This is good not only for your future bills and costs, but also for the planet and our future generations.

For further information on home energy grants, go to the following link: www.seai.ie/grants/home-energy-grants/

**Developed by the
NRH Accessibility Committee**



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The [National Rehabilitation Hospital](http://www.nrh.ie) is accredited by CARF (Commission for accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities) for a range of services, confirming they meet recognised international standards.