To help ensure your health and safety in the event of a storm or other interruptions to your utility service, you should take precautionary steps before and during an outage. In addition, you can assist people with special needs who may be at risk during utility outages by following the suggestions listed in this brochure.

HELP PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

If someone you know is elderly, blind or disabled, or dependent on life-sustaining or health-related equipment (i.e. ventilators, respirators, oxygen concentrators or enhancers) they may be at risk during an outage. You can help make sure their needs are met by taking the following actions:

- Notify others who could provide help: fire department, neighbors, nearby friends or relatives.
- Have a list of emergency numbers readily available for them.
- Check on them during an outage.
- Have a portable generator or an alternative source of power available. Be aware of the safety rules for its use.
- Have them register as a special needs customer with their utility.

REPORT AN OUTAGE

Central Hudson: Electric: 800-527-2714 or Gas: 800-942-8274
Con Ed: Electric: 800-752-6633 or Gas: 800-752-6633
Corning Gas: 800-834-2134
EnBridge St. Lawrence: 800-673- 3301
National Fuel Gas: 1-800-444-3130
National Grid: Electric: 800-867-5222
Long Island (gas): 1-800-490-0045
Metro NYC (gas): 1-718-643-4050
Upstate (gas): 1-800-892-2345
NYSEG: Electric: 800-572-1131 or Gas: 800-572-1121
O&R: Electric: 877-434-4100 or Gas: 800-533-5325
PSEG-LI: 800-490-0075
RG&E: Electric: 800-743-1701 or Gas: 800-743-1702

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Your Utility

Your utility is a good source of additional information such as:

- How to get help in the event of an outage
- Identification and care of life support customers
- Safe use of emergency equipment
- Availability of shelters
- Food preservation

Community Organizations

The local Red Cross, fire departments and the Salvation Army may also have information about outage safety, particularly regarding emergency assistance (shelter locations, etc).

Department of Public Service

In the event of an outage, if you have contacted your utility and still have questions, call the Department's toll-free HELPLINE at 1-800-342-3377. The HELPLINE's hours of operation are Monday through Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 4 p.m.

For more information:
Visit **www.AskPSC.com**, call **1-888-AskPSC1** toll-free or e-mail **web.questions@dps.ny.gov**

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. Department of Public Service

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UTILITY SERVICE INTERRUPTIONS

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

A New York State Department of Public Service Consumer Guide

PREPARING FOR AN OUTAGE

- Keep at least two, battery-operated radios and flashlights on hand, as well as a supply of fresh batteries.
- Create a pantry of at least three days worth of bottled water, medications and foods that don't require refrigeration or cooking. Be sure to include a manual can opener.
- Have an alternative cooking source such as a camp stove or outdoor grill, and follow appropriate safety rules for its use outside the residence. **DO NOT USE INDOORS.**
- Fill spare containers with water for washing and cooking.
- Have at least one telephone available that will continue to operate even when the household power is out. Cordless phones and internet-based phone service may not work during a power interruption.
- If you own a cell phone, keep it fully charged, and consider purchasing a car charger to maintain the charge during an outage.
- Have a list of emergency telephone numbers readily available.
- Keep your vehicle gas tank at least half full.
- Have extra blankets, coats, hats and gloves on hand to keep warm.
- Consider buying a generator, and follow the rules for using it outside the residence. **DO NOT USE INDOORS.**

DURING AN OUTAGE

Initially

- Check to see if your neighbors have power. If they do, first check to see if you have simply blown a fuse or tripped a circuit breaker. If that isn't the cause, call your utility to report the outage. Contact numbers are available on the back of this publication.
- Check local radio stations for announcements about restoration progress, safety tips and other key information.
- Call your local emergency response number for help, if needed. The number in many areas is 911. Look at the first page of your phone book for your area's emergency number.

Prevent damage

- Turn off major appliances and sensitive electronic equipment to prevent damage from a possible surge when the power comes back on. Leave a light or radio on so you will know when power has been restored.
- Keep your refrigerator and freezer doors shut to keep food from spoiling. If you use dry ice, handle it with gloves so it doesn't damage your skin.
- During a winter outage, turn on water faucets slightly to avoid frozen or burst pipes.

Take safety precautions

- Do not go near or touch fallen or sagging power lines: treat all wires as live and dangerous. Keep children and pets away from fallen electric wires. Never touch any lines or any items that are in contact with lines.
- Never use a charcoal grill to cook or heat indoors. This practice can lead to a build up of carbon monoxide, a poisonous gas.
- Do not use a gas oven to heat your home—prolonged use of an open oven in a closed house can lead to carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Emergency generators can be very dangerous if used improperly: follow the safety guidelines printed in the owner's manual. Before connecting a portable generator, turn off the main electric breaker to prevent electricity from traveling from the generator to de-energized power lines outside your house and possibly injuring repair crews.
- If your basement or home is in danger of flooding, contact your utility to turn off your electric or natural gas service. Never enter a flooded basement or home until service has been shut off because electric or natural gas equipment below the water line may be a hazard.
- If you smell gas, leave your house immediately and call your local utility once you are outside of the house.
- If using candles or storm lanterns, keep them away from drafts, flammable materials and children.

Watch for health problems

In cold weather:

- Stay warm by dressing in layers and minimizing your time outdoors.
- Know the mental and physical signs of cold stress (also known as hypothermia) and how to treat it. Warning signs include shivering, drowsiness, slurred speech and disorientation. Wrap the person in warm clothing, move the individual to a warm location and seek medical attention.

In hot weather:

- Keep cool by staying in a cool place. Take it easy, drink liquids and wear cool, loose fitting clothes.
- Know the signs of heat stress (also known as hyperthermia) including dizziness, nausea, headache and dry skin. If a person exhibits these symptoms, seek immediate medical help.

Throughout the year:

- Know the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning. Carbon monoxide (CO) is a toxic, odorless and colorless gas that occurs in your home when fuel-burning appliances are malfunctioning or used improperly. Symptoms of CO poisoning include headaches, dizziness, nausea and lightheadedness. If these symptoms occur, get the victim into fresh air and take the person to a hospital emergency room as quickly as possible.
- Consider installing a carbon monoxide detector to monitor the CO levels in your home.