

Emergency response plan for medically dependent electricity consumers

If you rely on mains electricity for critical medical support, a power cut can be serious. Having a clear and actionable emergency plan is crucial. Here's a guide to help you prepare and respond effectively.

Before an emergency : Get prepared

1. Notify your power company

- Let your power company know that you, or someone in your household, relies on electricity for medical support.
- If your power company requests confirmation of your medical dependency from a health practitioner, ask them to guide you through this process.
- If you switch power companies, inform your new provider and share the form with them.

2. Make a plan

- Use the provided checklist and template to detail what you will do if the power goes out.
- Review your plan regularly to keep it up to date.

3. Talk to your support network

- Share your plan with people you can rely on in an emergency – this might be family, neighbours, friends, and your healthcare provider.
- Update them if your plan changes.
- Ensure they know how to help you during a power cut.

4. Understand your medical equipment

- Identify medical equipment that requires electricity, and any other electrical equipment you need for critical medical support.
- Check if it has a backup power source (e.g. battery or generator) and test it.
- Know how long backup power will last and what to do if it runs out.
- Keep clear instructions for restarting equipment after a power cut.

5. Plan for alternate locations

- Identify safe places you can go if your home loses power for an extended period (e.g. a family member's house, a neighbour, or a hospital).
- Plan how to transport yourself, your medical equipment, and your supplies.

Before an emergency : Get prepared – continued

6. Prepare a grab bag

- Include essential items such as medications, a torch, warm clothing, a phone charger, spare batteries, and a list of emergency contacts.

7. Stay informed

- Know where to get updates if the power goes out—listen to the radio, check text alerts, or follow local news.
- Have a backup plan for staying connected in case the internet or landline isn't working. A car charger or USB power bank can keep your phone going.
- Get prepared with these useful resources:

[getready.co.nz](https://www.getready.co.nz) – advice to reduce risk, prepare and recover from emergencies

[redcross.org.nz](https://www.redcross.org.nz) – step-by-step guides to prepare for a disaster

[metservice.com](https://www.metservice.com) – stay ahead of the weather with real-time alerts.

During an emergency : Follow your plan

1. Stay calm and follow your plan

- Refer to your emergency plan.
- Contact your power company to report the outage if necessary.

2. Activate backup power

- Use your tested backup systems as planned.
- Monitor how long they are expected to last and conserve power where possible.

3. Contact your support network

- Notify your support people and healthcare providers if you need assistance.

4. Relocate if necessary

- If backup power is insufficient or the outage is prolonged, move to your designated safe location.
- Bring all necessary medical equipment, medications, and your grab bag.

5. Monitor updates

- Stay informed of how long the power cut will last (e.g. by calling your power company) and any local emergency updates.

6. If medical equipment fails

- Follow the plan for equipment failure outlined in your emergency plan.
- Contact emergency services (call 111) if life-threatening situations arise.

Emergency response checklist

Immediate actions

- Notify your power company and confirm they have your medically dependent status.
- Ensure you have instructions for restarting medical equipment after a power cut.
- Pack a grab bag with essential items and keep it accessible.

Information to include in your plan

- Support contacts: Names and phone numbers of two support people who can assist.
- Power company contact: Company name and emergency phone number.
- Medical contacts: Your doctor's and hospital's contact details.
- Equipment details: The make, model, and function of critical medical or other electrical equipment.
- Medications and accessories: Location of your medication and supplies, stored for easy access.
- Alternative locations: Address and transportation plan for where to go during a prolonged outage.
- Equipment failure protocol: Steps to take if your medical equipment stops working.

Things to keep in mind

- **Don't rely on the internet or a landline phone to contact people** – they might not work in a power cut.
- **If you have a backup power supply, make sure you know how to use it.**
- **Think about what you'll do if your backup power supply or batteries run out.**
- **If your batteries are rechargeable, check them regularly to make sure they're charged.**
- **Think about how you'll keep your mobile phone charged in a power cut.** USB power banks lose their charge over time so check it regularly to make sure it's fully charged. If possible, keep a car charger for your cell phone.

My Emergency Response Plan

Keep your plan visible and updated. Regularly practice and review it with your support network to ensure everyone knows their role during an emergency.

My details

Name

Address

Phone

I last updated my plan on:

Support Person 1

Name

Phone

Support Person 2

Name

Phone

Power Company

Company Name

Phone

Medical Contact

Name

Phone

Hospital

Name

Phone

Healthline

Phone

In an emergency, dial 111

My Emergency Response Plan – continued

If I can't reach my support network or emergency services, I will:

Information about my medical equipment

What critical medical or other electrical equipment I am reliant on, make and model, and relevant instructions on how to use it

If my medical equipment stops working, I will:

Medicine and medical devices *Keep these somewhere easy to access, even in the dark.*

My medicine and medical devices are stored here:

Where I will go if the power stays off

You might need to take extra actions specific to your situation – note them here.
You could also note where to get information in case of a natural disaster or a national emergency, like a radio station, website, or app.