OFFLINE RESILIENCE GUIDE // UK EDITION

Keeping Warm During a Winter Power Cut

A low-tech plan for keeping people warm when the heating stops. The emphasis is layers, one occupied room, draught reduction and safe heating practice.

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LAYER 1 // ACT

FIRST ACTIONS

Start here. Then read the conditions and exceptions below.

1. Wear several thin layers rather than relying on one bulky layer.
2. Close doors to unused rooms and close curtains to hold heat in the room you are using.
3. Blankets and sleeping bags work without fuel or electricity.
4. Never use a hob, oven, barbecue or camping stove to heat the home.
5. Check on people who are more vulnerable to cold.

> **IMPORTANT**
> This is practical preparedness information, not emergency instruction. During an incident, follow current advice from emergency services, your utility provider and relevant public authorities.

Warm people before you try to warm the building

When the heating stops, the cheapest and most reliable warmth is insulation around the person. Several thin layers, a warm hat, socks, blankets and sleeping bags continue working no matter how long the power is out.

Government cold-weather guidance recommends several layers of thin clothing and, under normal circumstances, keeping the rooms you spend most time in at least 18°C. During an outage you may not be able to maintain that temperature, which makes clothing and room choice more important.

Shrink the space you are trying to manage

Choose one occupied room if practical. Close internal doors to rooms you are not using and draw curtains to reduce heat loss. Block obvious draughts without covering necessary ventilation. Move blankets, torches, drinks, medication and chargers into that room early rather than repeatedly opening doors later.

If sunlight is available during the day, use it. When the sun has gone down, close curtains again. A small amount of deliberate heat retention is more useful than trying to electrically heat an entire cold house from a battery.

Know who needs more attention

Cold affects everyone, but older people, babies and young children, people with long-term health conditions, people who are pregnant, and people with limited mobility can face greater risk. Check on neighbours or relatives who may need help.

Learn the signs of hypothermia and seek medical help if you are concerned. NHS guidance says suspected hypothermia is a medical emergency that needs hospital treatment; call 999 or arrange urgent A&E assessment if you think someone has hypothermia. Do not drive yourself to A&E. Move the person into shelter, replace wet clothing and wrap them warmly while medical help is arranged; do not use hot baths or hot water bottles.

Do not turn cooking equipment into a heater

Improvised combustion heating can be deadly. The NHS warns that barbecues and camping stoves used indoors can cause carbon monoxide to build up. Ovens and hobs are not room heaters either.

If you use any fuel-burning appliance, follow its instructions and keep equipment intended for outdoor use outdoors. An audible carbon monoxide alarm is an important household safety device where combustion appliances are present.

Build the winter layer before buying a heater

A sleeping bag, blanket, base layers, warm socks and a hat have no runtime limit. They also help during boiler failures that are not electrical. That makes passive warmth the sensible first investment. Powered heating is a much larger load and should only be considered after you understand the battery capacity and safe operating environment required.

Useful kit for this plan

Equipment should support the plan, not replace it. The commercial catalogue is kept on a separate page.

KIT IS KEPT SEPARATE
Named products and Amazon UK affiliate links are kept on the dedicated KIT page so this guide remains editorial. Use the kit only after the plan identifies a genuine equipment gap.

OPEN KIT →

Sources checked for this guide

We use public sources for the factual backbone and write the guide in our own words. Source pages can change, so the links below are the place to check current official advice.

PRIMARY / AUTHORITATIVE SOURCE

UK Government Prepare: Cold weather, snow and ice

Cold-weather preparation, layered clothing, home warmth and support for people at higher risk.

https://prepare.campaign.gov.uk/be-informed-about-hazards/cold-weather-snow-ice/

PRIMARY / AUTHORITATIVE SOURCE

UK Government Prepare: Power cuts

Practical actions before and during a power cut, including 105 and communications planning.

https://prepare.campaign.gov.uk/be-informed-about-hazards/power-cuts/

PRIMARY / AUTHORITATIVE SOURCE

NHS: Carbon monoxide poisoning

Carbon monoxide risks, symptoms and prevention, including camping stoves and barbecues indoors.

https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/carbon-monoxide-poisoning/

PRIMARY / AUTHORITATIVE SOURCE

NHS: Hypothermia

Symptoms, emergency status and what to do while waiting for medical help.

https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hypothermia/

Editorial review date: 13 October 2026. If an official source conflicts with this page, follow the official source.

INFORMATION CHECK✓ CURRENT REVIEW

REVIEWED	NEXT REVIEW DUE	OFFICIAL REFERENCES
13 Oct 2026	10 Feb 2027	4 primary sources

If an official source conflicts with this guide, follow the current official source.

GET PREPPED NOW // ORIGINAL GUIDE

Source page: https://getpreppednow.co.uk/guides/keeping-warm-power-cut.html
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