OFFLINE RESILIENCE GUIDE // UK EDITION

What to Do During a UK Power Cut

The useful first actions, the numbers worth writing down, what can stop working with the electricity, and how to prepare before the lights go out.

8 MIN | UPDATED 12 OCT 2026 | UK FOCUS

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LAYER 1 // ACT

FIRST 10 MINUTES

Start here. Then read the conditions and exceptions below.

1. Call 105 in England, Scotland and Wales to report a power cut or find your network operator. In Northern Ireland, call NIE Networks on 03457 643 643.
2. Turn off high-risk appliances and leave one light on so you know when power returns.
3. Keep fridge and freezer doors closed.
4. Expect broadband, some landlines, boilers and local mobile coverage to be affected.
5. Use a battery radio and paper contacts as a backup information path.

> **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.

First, find out whether it is local

Check whether neighbours are also without power. If they have electricity, look at your consumer unit before assuming there is a network fault. If the wider area is affected, the electricity network operator is the right organisation to contact, not the company that sends your energy bill.

In England, Scotland and Wales, 105 is the free power-cut number. You can also use Powercut 105 online to identify your network operator and follow incident updates when internet access is still available. In Northern Ireland use NIE Networks Powercheck or its 24/7 helpline on 03457 643 643. Powercheck warns some outages and planned works may not yet appear on the map.

Make the house safe

Turn off appliances that could become dangerous if they restart unexpectedly, including ovens, irons, electric fires and fryers. It is sensible to unplug sensitive electronics such as televisions and computers if you are concerned about a surge when supply is restored. Leave one ordinary light switched on as a simple indicator that the electricity is back.

Keep away from damaged power lines or electrical infrastructure. High-voltage electricity can jump gaps, so do not approach a fallen cable.

Protect communication and battery life

Broadband equipment needs electricity, and some modern landlines depend on the router or powered equipment in the home. Local mobile coverage can also be affected if nearby masts lose supply. Keep one phone charged, use a power bank for small loads and avoid wasting phone battery as a room torch.

A battery or wind-up radio provides another route for public information. Write down 105 for Great Britain or 03457 643 643 for Northern Ireland, along with key family contacts and useful radio stations.

Keep cold food cold

The Food Standards Agency says a power cut under four hours is unlikely to affect the safety of chilled or frozen food. Its detailed guidance says a closed fridge should stay cold for up to four hours, while a full freezer may keep food frozen for up to 48 hours and a half-full freezer for about 24 hours. These are estimates, so temperature matters.

Keep doors shut. If the outage is prolonged, follow current Food Standards Agency advice rather than guessing from smell or appearance alone.

Think about dependencies before the next outage

Boilers, heat pumps, broadband routers, powered medical devices and some telecare equipment can all depend on mains electricity. Make a list of the devices your household actually relies on and decide which need a backup plan.

If somebody has additional needs, check Priority Services Register eligibility before an incident. Ofgem says eligible households can receive forms of extra support, including priority assistance in emergencies and, where possible, advance notice of planned power cuts.

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: 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

Food Standards Agency: food safety in a power cut

Food safety during power loss, including fridge and freezer guidance.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/food-safety-in-a-power-cut-advice-for-consumers/food-safety-in-a-power-cut-advice-for-consumers

PRIMARY / AUTHORITATIVE SOURCE

Ofgem: Priority Services Register

Who may be eligible and what additional support energy suppliers and network operators can provide.

https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/your-energy-supply/how-manage-your-energy-supply/join-your-suppliers-priority-services-register

NORTHERN IRELAND / NETWORK OPERATOR

NIE Networks: Powercheck

NI outages and 24/7 reporting line: 03457 643 643. Not all faults appear immediately on the map.

https://powercheck.nienetworks.co.uk/

Editorial review date: 12 October 2026. If an official source conflicts with this page, follow the official source.

INFORMATION CHECK✓ CURRENT REVIEW

REVIEWED	NEXT REVIEW DUE	OFFICIAL REFERENCES
12 Oct 2026	23 Jan 2027	4 official 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/uk-power-cut-guide.html
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