

### Learn ABOUT YOUR LOCAL POWER OUTAGES:

- Power outages can happen for many reasons, for example:
  - A storm or other disaster may damage electrical equipment
  - Utilities may shut off power in advance of a storm
  - In some Western states, utilities may shut off power during hot and dry weather, so power lines do not touch trees and start fires
  - Too much air-conditioning in heat waves may overwhelm the electric system
- Learn about what kinds of power outages you can expect.
  - What kinds of outages might you have? Consider the list above and other possibilities.
  - Are there any you will not experience? For example, the Power Shutoffs during “fire weather” are only in California as of 2020.
  - How long do power outages usually last? This might be hard to predict.
  - How frequent are power outages? For example, you may have a 15-minute outage twice per year, then a one-day outage once every few years.
  - Will you have a heads-up? If so, how much notice before the power outage?
- If you are not sure, get in touch with your local emergency services office.

### Reflect on YOUR OWN NEEDS FOR POWER:

- Power outages can affect everybody, regardless of disability. For example:
  - Losing air conditioning or fans during a heat wave can over heat a home.
  - Food may spoil and it may be difficult to cook food.
  - Electronics like computers, TVs and chargers may not work.
  - Cell phones & Internet may shut down. Land-line phones are more reliable but not a guarantee.
  - Public and personal transportation may be affected, including for charging electric vehicles and opening garage doors.
  - Elevators may not work.
- Are any of these problems especially important because of your disability? For example:
  - Your house or apartment building may have an elevator, which could impact your ability to evacuate or return home.
  - If phone and Internet are down, it may be tough to reach personal care attendants.
  - Extreme heat can be especially rough for certain disabilities.
- Ask yourself: what extra needs do I have because of my disability? For example:
  - What power needs do you have for medical items? For example, operating a ventilator or charging a wheelchair.
  - Does your medical equipment have a battery? If so, how long does it last? This is especially important for things like ventilators and CPAP machines.
  - Do you have any medications that must be refrigerated?

### Prepare IN ADVANCE:

- Plan so you are ready for the most intense outages. You might wonder, “what makes something more dangerous?” Examples include:
  - Little or no advance notice
  - Longer outages, especially if it is longer than your backup batteries can handle
  - Difficulty evacuating (for example, if your elevator is not working)
  - Difficulty contacting your support network over phone or Internet
- Get the basics for power outages
  - Make sure you have enough fresh batteries for your electronics
  - Purchase flashlights, lamps and handheld radios
  - Have non-perishable food at home
  - Consider purchasing a generator or large backup battery.
- Reinforce your electric items
  - Keep batteries fresh (including in wheelchairs) and charge regularly
  - Work with your doctor to get long-duration batteries for your vital life-sustaining items, such as ventilators
  - If your item has replaceable batteries, have at least 2 sets on hand.
- Keep an eye out for notifications! A heads-up can keep you safe.
  - Sign up for your local emergency services notifications.
  - Your electric utility may also have emergency notifications.
  - You can follow your utility and emergency services on social media.

### Consider IF EVACUATING IS A BETTER DECISION:

- If you get a warning about a planned or possible power outage, think about whether you will be able to stay at home safely. If the power goes out suddenly, consider how long you can manage at home.
- It may be safer to leave your home than to stay, for example if:
  - You have a ventilator with limited backup power
  - You will not be able to reach personal care attendants
  - A broken elevator will strand you if there is another emergency
  - If you do not have your own car, it may be hard to evacuate if the disaster continues. Leaving early could avoid that problem.
- If you leave, plan ahead:
  - Find accessible shelter. This could be a hotel, a family member’s home, or an evacuation shelter.
  - Arrange transportation – whether public transit, a nonprofit, your own vehicle, or a friend’s vehicle. Work with care attendants if need be.
  - Pack enough supplies for 3 days or more.

