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These States are Most Likely to Get Blackouts This Summer. Here's How to Prepare

The risk of blackouts is up in many parts of the US. Get ready by gathering a few essentials beforehand.

Andrew Blok

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5 min read 



Candles can provide more than ambience in a blackout.

Enrique Micaelo Sanchez/EyeEm/Getty Images

Much of the US and Canada faces a higher than normal risk of blackouts this year. The North American Electric Reliability Corporation warns that above-average temperatures (which drive up demand for electricity) and an ongoing drought (which decreases supply of hydroelectric power) could cause problems for chunks of the grid from June to September 2022. When supply and demand aren't in balance, blackouts can occur.

Avoiding this kind of blackout would require reducing demand or increasing supply. If a blackout does occur in your area, a backup power source such as a portable power station or a generator can keep some of your lights on. If buying one of these is out of reach or doesn't seem worth it, you can still prepare for a blackout by gathering a few key supplies. A bit of planning can make sure you're not left high and dry when you're in the dark.

Where are blackouts most likely to happen this summer?

The potential for blackouts isn't evenly spread, NERC reported. In a May report, the nonprofit identified two risk levels for blackouts -- elevated and high -- for the regional organizations responsible for operating the grid. An elevated risk means there's a chance that demand could exceed supply during periods of higher-than-normal demand. NERC identified an elevated risk of blackouts for the western North America, from Washington south to northern Baja California, east to Texas and north to include most of North and South Dakota. Saskatchewan has an elevated risk, too.

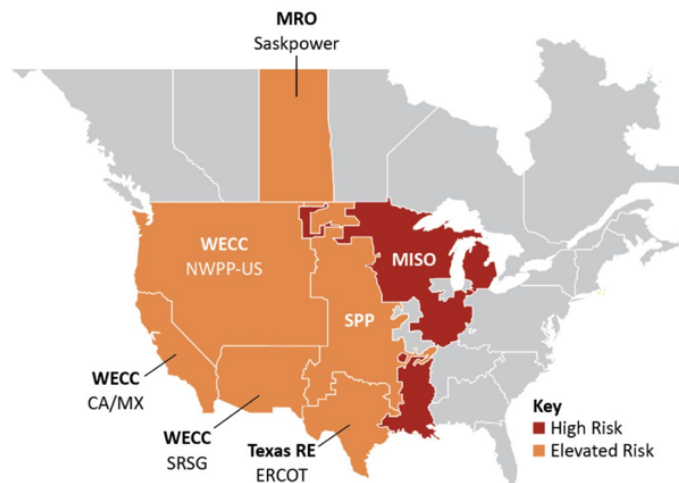


Figure 1: Summer Reliability Risk Area Summary

| Seasonal Risk Assessment Summary | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| High | Potential for insufficient operating reserves in normal peak conditions |
| Elevated | Potential for insufficient operating reserves in above-normal conditions |
| Low | Sufficient operating reserves expected |

Much of North America is at an elevated or high risk of blackouts this summer.

CNET/Screenshot by Zach McAuliffe

One of these regions -- the Midcontinent Independent System Operator -- has a high risk, which means

there's a chance that demand could exceed supply during normal peak conditions, such as a hot afternoon when a lot of air conditioners are running. MISO covers parts of the Dakotas, Kentucky, Missouri, Montana and Texas. It also covers most of Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana and Michigan. And it includes all of Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

While many of the reasons for this potential energy crunch have to do with weather and infrastructure, another is rising demand. (The report doesn't mention climate change. It does cite extreme weather, wildfires and higher than normal temperatures, however, all of which climate change affects.) NERC said that peak power demand is projected to go up 1.7% from last year. People in the region can directly affect demand, and it's not uncommon for utilities and regulators to ask residents to curb their electricity usage. A few ways to save electricity and money are unplugging appliances, adjusting your thermostat and weatherstripping your windows.

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Read more: [How to Save Money Around Your Home: 27 Simple Tips](#)

If blackouts do occur in your area this summer, there are a few things you can do beforehand to prepare.

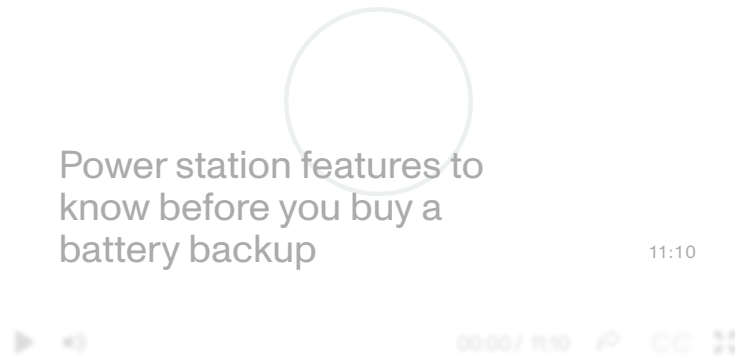
Why prepare for a blackout?

Blackouts are disruptive, plain and simple. Those disruptions could range from something as minor as an interrupted TV show to as life-threatening as a temperature-sensitive medicine going bad.

Most people grew up doing fire drills in school. Earthquake drills are expected on the West Coast. Tornado drills throughout the Midwest and South are regular occurrences. While blackouts pose less of an immediate danger, you can take a few steps to make sure you're as safe as can be.

How to prepare for a blackout: A checklist

The Department of Energy recently published a list of some things to have on hand for blackout preparation. That list is below, with a few additions.



- Flashlights and batteries: The DOE suggests a flashlight in every room, but it seems good enough to have plenty of lights and batteries handy. Sure, phones have flashlights, but if a blackout carries on for a while, you might want to save that phone charge for other tasks, like communication or entertaining a kid.
- Candles and matches: Candles don't run out of battery and matches are a reliable fire starter. Take extra caution with open flames, don't leave them unattended and don't use them if there's a risk of a gas leak.
- Alternative lighting: Getting a solar lantern that can recharge without plugging in or LED lanterns with long-lasting batteries are two other ways to safely light your house.
- Your utility's emergency number: If you smell a gas leak, you don't want to be reliant on Wi-Fi to pull up your utility's emergency number. Write it down somewhere.
- Backup generator: Generators can be big purchases but can provide backup energy. If you get one, make sure it is safely installed and far from your windows to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Ice packs and a cooler: If you have medicine that

needs to stay cold, make sure you have some ice packs and a cooler ready. Then, only open it when you need it. Each time it's opened, cold air escapes and reduces the time the interior will stay cold. The same goes for your fridge and freezer.

- **Water:** If you get water from a well, you'll need to keep water on hand. The DOE suggests one gallon a day per person.
- **Food:** Keep some food that's nonperishable and doesn't require cooking. Canned goods would work well here.
- **First aid kit:** You can stock your own first aid kit or [buy one from the Red Cross](#).
- **Disaster plan:** Decide beforehand where you and your family will meet if your home isn't an option and communication isn't possible.
- **Locations of cooling stations:** Cities often have cooling stations in the summer (or warming stations in the winter). If your air conditioning is out, make sure you know places you can head if it gets dangerously hot.

What to do after a blackout

After the power comes back, the hard part is over, but you'll need to dispose of any spoiled food or medicine. With food, it's best to err on the side of caution. Throw things away if they've been unrefrigerated (above 40 degrees) for [two or more hours](#), the Department of Homeland Security says. (The department runs the website [Ready.gov](#) with tips to prepare for almost any kind of disaster.) With medicines, it's best to consult with your doctor.

A blackout is bound to bring some sort of inconvenience, but managing that inconvenience and staying safe is possible with just a bit of preparation.

Read more

- [Most of US at Risk of Blackouts This Summer, Regulator Says](#)
- [Battery Backup vs. Generator: Which Backup Power Source Is Best for You?](#)

- [Best Portable Power Stations of 2022](#)

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Hurricane Season Is Here. Take These Steps to Prepare

Here's what you need to know about hurricane season.

Erin Gobler

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4 min read 



The Atlantic is expected to have another "above-normal" hurricane season in 2022, according to NOAA.

Mike Hill/Getty Images

Hurricane season will likely be busier than normal again this year, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. [NOAA's Climate Prediction Center](#) estimates a 65% chance of an "above-normal" hurricane season in the Atlantic.

Hurricanes and other major storms are some of the

most prevalent natural disasters and pose a serious danger to anyone in their path. There's an average of about 12 named storms per year, between hurricanes and tropical storms. Unfortunately, we can't predict when they'll hit.

There is, however, a hurricane season during which major storms are expected, with September the most likely month for a hurricane. Hurricane season varies for different parts of the country, according to Ready.gov:

- Eastern Pacific: May 15 to Nov. 30
- Atlantic: June 1 to Nov. 30
- Central Pacific: June 1 to Nov. 30

We've rounded up a few steps you can take to prepare for hurricane season and help protect your family and home.

Create an emergency plan

One of the most important steps to preparing for hurricane season is creating your family's emergency plan, including your evacuation route.

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First, know ahead of time how your family will communicate during a hurricane and how you'll receive emergency alerts. Know where you'll shelter in place, but also the evacuation route you'll take, if necessary.

Your plan should also include any special measures necessary to care for children, pets or family members with mobility issues. Additionally, make a plan for any household members who require special medication or medical equipment.

Before hurricane season, make sure everyone in the family understands the plan, including children.

Secure your home

As hurricane season approaches, take steps to secure your property against potential hurricanes and high winds. A few steps you can take include:

- Trim trees to remove weak branches
- Install hurricane-proof doors
- Install storm shutters to windows
- Replace exterior glass with tempered glass
- Have a plan for outdoor furniture, potted plants and toys

Prepare an emergency kit

The last thing you want to do when a hurricane is approaching is rush around to find everything you may need for the coming days. Instead, have an emergency kit or go bag on hand that you can turn to. Your emergency kit can include:

- Nonperishable food
- Bottled water
- Flashlights
- Extra batteries
- Portable radio
- First-aid supplies
- Prescription medication
- Pet food
- Cash
- Blankets
- Phone chargers
- Basic hygiene items

Check your insurance policies

Before hurricane season each year is a good time to double-check your insurance policies and make sure you're fully covered in case there's an incident.

First, you should ensure that your current coverage is enough to rebuild your home and replace all of your

personal property in the event of a personal loss. You should also make sure you have the types of coverages specifically needed for hurricanes: flood insurance and windstorm insurance.

If you live in an area prone to hurricanes, make sure you have the necessary coverages. Understand your deductible and keep enough in a savings account to cover it in case there's a loss.

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Read more

- [Hurricanes are getting stronger, and climate change may be a factor](#)
- [Hurricanes: Evidence mounts that they're getting stronger and wetter](#)
- [Tropical Storm Omar just broke an Atlantic hurricane-season record](#)

Keep an inventory of your belongings

If you live in an area prone to hurricanes and are at risk of your home being damaged, be sure to keep a running inventory of your personal property.

If there's a storm and you have to file a homeowners insurance claim, you'll have to provide an inventory of items that were destroyed. The quicker you can provide this information to the insurance company, the quicker it can settle your claim and you can start to recover.

To create your inventory, simply go room by room and add each item to a spreadsheet. Include the value of each item in case you have to file a claim. For valuable items, you can also include photos or purchase receipts.

Be sure to store your inventory digitally -- there are

apps that will help you do this. You should also update it each year before hurricane season.

Keep important documents somewhere safe

If you're storing important documents in your home in paper form, it's time to find a new strategy. First, make sure that every important document is in a waterproof and fireproof safe in your home.

Next, make sure that each document has a digital copy so that if your home is destroyed and your safe can't be recovered, you still have copies of everything.

Important documents to keep safe include:

- Birth certificates
- Marriage certificates
- Social Security cards
- Military service records
- Insurance policies
- Tax statements
- Health records
- Financial records

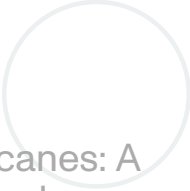
Keep a hurricane checklist on hand

When a hurricane hits, the fear and adrenaline can make it easy to forget what steps to follow. Before hurricane season arrives, make a checklist of exactly what you'll do and what you'll pack if a hurricane hits. That way, if there is a storm, you can refer to your list rather than trying to remember every important step yourself.

Next steps

It's impossible to prevent a hurricane, but you can take steps to keep your family safe if one hits. To further prepare for hurricane season, check out our list of the [best emergency apps for natural disasters](#)

to help you prepare for, make it through and recover from a hurricane.



Atlantic hurricanes: A violent past and a worrisome future

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