

The UK Power Cut *Ready* Checklist

Everything a prepared British household needs before the next storm takes the lines down: tick it off once, check it twice a year, and ride out the next cut in comfort. Built on gov.uk Prepare, NESO and fire service guidance.

01 Before anything else: the ten minute setup

These cost nothing and matter more than any purchase. Do them today.

- ☐ **Save 105 in every phone.** The national power cut line: connects you to your local network operator in England, Scotland and Wales. Northern Ireland: NIE Networks, 03457 643 643.
- ☐ **Find your consumer unit (fuse box) in daylight** and note which switch is the main and which are the trip switches.
- ☐ **Look up your network operator** at powercut105.com and write it here: _____
- ☐ **Check Priority Services Register eligibility.** Pension age, medical conditions, powered medical equipment, young children: registering is quick and brings priority support in cuts.
- ☐ **Write a paper card of key numbers** (105, your operator, boiler engineer, a neighbour) and tape it inside a kitchen cupboard.
- ☐ **Agree the household rules:** nobody opens the fridge or freezer, torches not candles, everyone gathers in one room.

The calm facts: NESO expects comfortable electricity margins this winter. Real UK power cuts are local and storm driven, usually over within hours. This checklist is about riding those out well, not preparing for a blackout that is not forecast.

02 Light

- ☐ **One torch per person**, kept at bedsides and by the fuse box, plus one spare in a fixed spot.
- ☐ **A head torch for each adult:** both hands for cooking, children and the fuse box.
- ☐ **One room-filling lantern** for the main living room, charged or with fresh batteries.
- ☐ **Two full changes of spare batteries** in the sizes your lights actually take.
- ☐ **Candles only as last resort:** stable holder, a metre from anything above, never unattended, never overnight.

03 Power and communications

- ☐ **A high capacity power bank (20,000mAh+), kept charged.** Roughly four full phone charges. Check it monthly.
 - ☐ **A battery or wind-up radio.** Local BBC radio carries restoration updates when mobile masts fade hours into a wide cut.
 - ☐ **Car charger lead in the car.** The drive is a power station; keep the tank above a quarter in storm season.
 - ☐ **Consider a portable power station** (sizing tool and honest buyer guide at homereadypower.co.uk) if you work from home, store medicine cold, or rely on powered equipment.
 - ☐ **Digital landline users: ask your provider about battery backup.** Providers must keep at-risk customers able to call 999 for at least an hour of a cut.
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04 Warmth

- ☐ **Choose your one warm room** (small, few outside walls) and know how you would curtain it off.
 - ☐ **Blankets or sleeping bags for each person,** findable in the dark.
 - ☐ **Hot water bottles,** one per person: the cheapest heating there is.
 - ☐ **Hats, gloves and warm layers** stored together, not scattered.
 - ☐ **A carbon monoxide alarm (BS EN 50291) in any room where fuel burns.** Test it monthly. Never any outdoor stove, barbecue or generator indoors: no exceptions.
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05 Water and food

- ☐ **Bottled drinking water: 3 litres per person per day, 3 days minimum.** (gov.uk Prepare, citing WHO).
Family of four = 36 litres.

- ☐ **Two or three food grade containers** you can fill from the taps the moment a storm or hard freeze is forecast.

- ☐ **Three days of no-cook food per person:** tins eaten cold, crackers, spreads, cereal bars, UHT milk, chocolate.

- ☐ **TWO manual tin openers.** The second is for when the first disappears.

- ☐ **Flasks ready to fill with boiling water at the warning.** Hot drinks for a day without lighting anything.

- ☐ **A safe off-mains way to boil water** (butane stove used to its instructions, or outdoors).

06 People, pets and paperwork

- ☐ **One week buffer of every prescription medicine**, rotated so it never expires, plus a paper list of doses.
- ☐ **First aid kit checked against the gov.uk Prepare list.**
- ☐ **Babies: ready-to-drink formula** (powder needs 70°C water), nappies and wipes for three days beyond normal stock.
- ☐ **Older relatives: on the Priority Services Register**, with their own torch, blanket and numbers card. Check their landline works in a cut.
- ☐ **Pets: three days of food and extra water.**
- ☐ **Cash in small notes**, enough for several days of essentials: card machines die with the power.
- ☐ **Paper copies of key numbers and home insurance details** in one waterproof pouch.

07 When the cut happens

- ☐ **Check the trip switches first.** All up but no power, and the street dark? Network fault: dial 105.
- ☐ **Note the time on paper and seal the fridge and freezer.** Fridge protects food ~4 hours; a full freezer ~48 hours, half full ~24 (Food Standards Agency).
- ☐ **Switch off the hob, oven, iron and heaters;** leave one light on so you know when power returns.
- ☐ **Phones to low power mode;** one phone on at a time in a long cut; text rather than call.
- ☐ **Afterwards: restock the same day and check compensation.** Ofgem guaranteed standards pay set amounts for longer cuts, from your network operator.

08 Keep it alive: the clock-change ritual

Fifteen minutes, twice a year, when the clocks change (the same weekend you test the smoke alarms):

☐ Rotate food, water and medicines within six months of their dates.

☐ Test every torch, the lantern and the radio.

☐ Top up the power bank and any power station.

☐ Press the test button on CO and smoke alarms.

☐ Re-read the numbers card: suppliers and prescriptions change.

☐ Date of last check: _____

Go deeper: every item on this checklist has a full, honest buying guide at homereadypower.co.uk, including the power station sizing calculator and the water storage calculator. Sources: gov.uk Prepare campaign, NESO Winter Outlook, Food Standards Agency, Ofgem, UK fire services.