

## Storm Preparation

Choptank Electric Cooperative does everything it can to avoid interruptions in your electric service, but sometimes severe weather conditions make power outages unavoidable. To minimize inconvenience, discomfort and danger, you should consider preparing now for the possibility of severe weather.

- Create an emergency kit with a battery-powered radio, flashlight and candles, extra batteries, matches, first-aid kit, fire extinguisher, bottled water and non-perishable food. If your home has a fireplace or wood stove, keep a good supply of wood on hand for the winter. When you hear of a storm approaching, make sure a few days' worth of wood is stored in a protected area so it won't be wet when you need to burn it.
- If you have extra heaters that use kerosene or another fuel, make sure you have adequate supplies of fuel available. Use fuel-burning heaters ONLY in a well-ventilated area. NEVER burn charcoal indoors! The fumes are hazardous. Always store the fuel in a cool, dry place - not in your home.
- Don't toss out old, worn blankets or quilts. Keep them stored for emergencies. They not only help you stay warm, but also can be used to cover doors, windows and other sources of cold air leaks during a winter outage.
- If your power does go out, check your own fuses and circuit breakers first. Call your neighbors to see if they have also lost power, then contact the co-op's automated outage reporting line at 1-800-410-4790, toll free, to report the outage.
- Remember that in an outage a cordless phone won't work. Make sure you have at least one regular telephone with a cord to use if the power goes out. If you do not have a land line and use a cell phone, please be sure the co-op has that number in our system.
- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors shut. A closed fridge will keep food chilled for 12 hours.
- To keep pipes from freezing in a cold house in the winter, open all the faucets slightly to keep them dripping.
- Unplug appliances with sophisticated electronics, such as videocassette recorders, televisions, computers and microwave ovens, so they aren't damaged by a surge when the power comes back on. Leave one light on so you'll know when power is restored, and then gradually reconnect your remaining appliances to avoid overloading the circuits.
- After the storm, replace used batteries in your emergency kit and restock food and water to be prepared for the next storm.

You can use a portable generator to supply electricity to your appliances during a power outage. If used improperly a generator can kill you and the people who are restoring power to your building. They also can damage the appliances you connect.

Home emergency generators are usually powered by gasoline, which must be properly handled as well.