Make contact after an emergency

Disaster events have the potential to cripple communication systems quite easily, making it challenging to get news to others of current conditions and wellness status.

Having a mobile phone is perhaps one of the best safety measures in the event of a diaster. While voice calls can tie up bandwidth and voice networks, data-based services like text messages and emails are less likely to experience network congestion and will go through more easily, advises the Federal Communications Commission.

out to someone to provide a time, and others can access status update. This person, in turn, can relay information to others.

Another idea is to use social media to post a status report. This will help get the word out to the greatest number of people in the least amount of time, provided a few minutes of network connectivity are available.

A third resource is contacting loved ones through a local American Red Cross chapter. The agency can help family members reconnect whether separation was caused by an emergency at home or overseas. Individuals also can list themselves on the Red Cross' "Safe and Well" website. Sta-As soon as possible, reach tus can be updated at any the information to check in on loved ones who have been out of contact.

Safely handle a prolonged power outage

the electricity that powers everything in homes and businesses. A shortterm loss of power can be a nuisance, but extended power outages can cause damage and may even be dangerous.

Widespread power outages are often anticipated during or after severe storms, which can disable entire power grids. Because damaged power lines and infrastructure must be carefully assessed after severe storms, it may take anywhere from hours to several days before power is fully restored.

The Food and Drug Administration says that food spoilage is one of the hazards of long-term power outages. If a storm is imminent, you can be proactive by freezing the contents of the refrigerator when possible so that items can stay at safe temperatures longer, advises the FDA. Food

Accidents and storms can disrupt can remain safe for up to two hours at refrigerator temperature before it starts to spoil. Grouping food together in the freezer also can help it stay colder longer. Having extra ice on hand or freezing containers of water also can provide a chilling effect, as well as serve as a water supply if faucet water is unavailable - which can be a concern for those with wellpumped water.

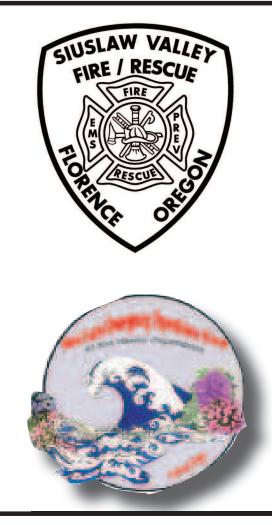
> Your barbecue can turn out to be your best friend during power outages. Many stoves, even gas ones, will not light because of electric ignitions. A gas camping stove or barbecue can serve as the primary place to cook food until power is restored. Always have a secondary propane tank on hand.

> Keep plenty of bottled water on hand, especially if your water supply is well-fed and requires an electric pump to activate flow.

Stock up on blankets and warn clothing. Power outages during th winter can be especially challenging because of the lack of heat in a home Family members can huddle togeth er in small rooms to conserve heat People with wood-burning stove can use them to keep warm.

If you have a generator, run i safely. The Consumer Product Safet Commission says generators should be operated as far away from th house as possible to avoid deadly carbon monoxide fumes. Also, us appropriately-gauged, outdoor-rated extension cords to power up genera tors.

It is also important to stay pu and avoid the road after a storm that causes a power outage. Wires may b down, traffic lights may not work and dangerous debris may be littering th roads. Hunkering down is the bes approach until power is restored.



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