

WHAT TO DO WHEN THE POWER GOES OUT?

Power outage for 72 Hours or longer

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A Project of Climate Smart Southwest – PSR, AZ Chapter

The focus of this guide is on four areas of neighborhood resilience: water security, coolness without a power source, food security and communications:

This resource sheet addresses (1) planning in advance and (2) what to have ready for a heat emergency

Planning in Advance for a Heat Emergency

Planning Water Security:

1. INSTALL or identify a NEIGHBORHOOD WATER CISTERN
2. Need cisterns to be kept full. Keep large bottles of water in your freezer.
3. Need filter to make water potable. Need two gallons of water per person per day in summer.
4. Need research on compostable toilets and other options to minimize water need.
5. Identify any other resources you may need:

Identify The Cool Places In Your Neighborhood:

1. Safe parks or community facilities
2. Homes with basements, if neighbors willing to share
3. Locations with lots of trees

Keep Cool Supply list:

1. Hat, spray bottles, water bottles, shade cloth.
2. Identify places to hang wet sheets for power free swamp cooling
3. Have freeze dried camp foods in stock

Planning Food Security:

1. ACQUIRE SOLAR OVEN(S) & LOCATE IN CENTRAL SPOT FOR ALL TO USE
2. Rethink kinds of food purchased – buy more dried or canned; less frozen or needing refrigeration.
3. Grow your own fresh vegetables and fruits; plant a citrus tree (grapefruit hardiest, lemon least hardy).
4. For cooking, use solar ovens, BBQ, wood and fire pit. Avoid adding heat to interiors. Cook outdoors.
5. Identify available generator to re-cool selected refrigerators.

Keeping cool with batteries and generators or other power sources:

1. Battery-operated desk fan available at Ace Hardware.
2. A generator could be used at central location the during heat of the day (with installation of appropriate electrical panel). Options are a gas-powered generator or one powered by solar panels and connected to a portable inverter.
3. Also could use electric car batteries as limited power source.

Communication Resources:

1. NEED RADIO POWERED BY BATTERIES, HAND CRANK OR SOLAR POWER IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD
2. Need source of news and resources when radio, TV, cell phone and computer are not powered.
3. Decide on site for posting notices of news or needs. Publicize date/time and source of posting.

Critical Questions for your Neighborhood

1. Are we willing to share resources among our neighbors?
2. Would those with basements and cooler locations be willing to share space?
3. Where is the nearest cooling place, trees with grass?
4. Who among neighbors has certain expertise or skills?
5. Who has mobility limits or medical needs?
6. What about folks who don't prepare?

(Turn over for more)

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What to do in a Heat Emergency: Finding Coolness And Safety Without Electric Power

Goal is to meet sustainable health need of 4 hours daily in areas with 85° F or less.

Keep Cool : Goal is to meet sustainable health need of 4 hours daily in areas with 85° F or less.

1. IDENTIFY THE COOL PLACES IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD
2. Find shelter in the middle unit of multi-family housing or home with a basement.
3. Open windows at night and cover sunny windows in day; Use shade cloth to keep sun off windows
4. Wet your shirt as a portable evaporative cooler
5. Stay near trees
6. Use a spray bottle to dampen neck, inside of elbows and knees to feel cooler.
7. Hang wet sheets in breeze at slightly open doors and windows
8. Dip in a pool; rest in the shade

Keep Hydrated with Water:

1. Resources you already have: Stored water? Bathtubs (line with clean plastic sheeting) Cisterns? Pool?
2. Remember to drink water before you feel thirsty; in hot weather you can sweat out more fluid than your body can absorb in the same time period.
3. Drink before exposure, during and after heat exposure 16-32 oz./hour in hot weather according to the Arizona Department of Health Services.
4. Avoid alcoholic beverages which will cause more dehydration.

Communicate with neighbors and emergency resources:

1. KEEP IN TOUCH WITH YOUR NEIGHBORS, ESPECIALLY THOSE MOST VULNERABLE:
2. Organize community events, such as cooking, cooling areas, communication responsibility, etc.
3. Use message boards to post help, coordination and information update notices
4. Identify and use battery operated radios to keep in touch with current events
5. Charge cell phones with solar powered battery chargers
6. Organize emergency response when needed
7. Offer emotional support for distressed members of your community

References:

Arizona Department of Health Services Heat Emergency Response Plan (May, 2013)
http://www.azdhs.gov/phs/oeh/pdf/ADHS_HeatEmergencyResponsePlan.pdf , especially

“Tips to avoid heat related illness” on page 18 and

“CDC Frequently Asked Questions about Extreme Heat” on page 23.

Also see: Pima County: <http://www.pimahealth.org/heat/>