LOCAL WOODCHUCK KNOW-HOW FROM CENTRAL VERMONT

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS WORKBOOK

SURVIVING A TWO-WEEK POWER OUTAGE

Know your power, water, heat and food before the lights go out.



knowyoursystems.org

PRACTICAL ADVICE FROM LOCAL EMERGENCY MANAGERS

KNOW YOUR TOWN

Every town does this differently. Call the town office or check its website, and write down what you learn. "We don't have one" is worth knowing too.

Our town _____ Town office phone _____

SHELTER

Does our town have an emergency shelter? ☐ yes ☐ no

Where is it? _____

If there is none, the nearest shelter or warming place is _____

Can we bring pets? ☐ yes ☐ no How will we hear it is open? _____

WHO TO CALL WHEN IT IS NOT A 911 EMERGENCY

Emergency Management Director _____ phone _____

Fire department _____ phone _____

Ambulance or rescue squad _____ phone _____

Police: ☐ State Police ☐ sheriff ☐ town phone _____

Road crew: washouts, trees down _____ phone _____

WHERE THE TOWN POSTS NEWS

☐ Front Porch Forum ☐ town website ☐ Facebook ☐ email list
☐ notice board

Web address or page name _____

☐ We are signed up for VT-Alert for our town at **vtalert.gov**

AROUND TOWN

Where can we get sand for the driveway? _____

Is there a neighbor-help or check-in program? _____

Our neighborhood or zone contact, if the town has them _____

Roads near us that flood or wash out first _____

Nearest hospital _____ phone _____

Nearest place to warm up or charge a phone _____

KNOW YOUR SYSTEMS



An ice storm, a flood that takes out the road, a big snow: any of them can leave a house without power, or cut off from town, for days and sometimes for two weeks. Most advice plans for three days. This workbook plans for **two weeks**: help cannot reach everyone right away, and a household ready for two weeks can ride out almost anything shorter.

This is our best advice, not a rulebook. You know your house, your family and your needs best. Take what fits and change what doesn't.

ASK THREE THINGS ABOUT EVERY SYSTEM IN THE HOUSE

1. **What does it need to run?**
2. **What happens when it stops?**
3. **What is our backup, and can everyone here use it?**

"One is none, two is one."

HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

1. **Walk the house together.** Everyone who lives here, pencil in hand.
2. **Take it a page at a time.** Getting prepared can feel like a lot, so go at your own pace. A blank line is just a question to chase down.
3. **Try every backup once.** Start the generator. Find the shutoff and turn it.
4. **Picture day ten, not just the first night.** What runs out first? Thinking it through now keeps you calmer then.
5. **Keep this workbook where everyone can find it:** in your outage bucket, a kitchen drawer, or with the flashlights. Go through it again each fall.

2 OUR HOUSEHOLD

Who lives here, how to find us, and where we stand

911 address _____

How to find us, if you have never been here _____

_____

Who lives here _____ cell _____

_____ cell _____

_____ cell _____

_____ cell _____

_____ cell _____

If we can't get home, we meet at _____

Out-of-state contact _____ phone _____

COULD WE GO TWO WEEKS?

Fill this in last. Any short line is the next thing to work on.

WHAT	TWO WEEKS TAKES	WE HAVE	PAGE
Drinking water	gallons	gallons	8
Food	meals	days	9
Generator fuel	gallons	gallons	6
Heating fuel or wood	14 days	days	11
Medicines	14 days	days	13
Feed and water for animals	14 days	days	14

WHAT'S INSIDE

2 Our household
3 Power
4 Backup power
8 Water
9 Food
11 Heat and fuel
12 Staying warm
13 People
14 Animals
15 First aid
16 Staying in touch
17 Neighbors, roads
18 Plumbing
20 Through the year
21 When a storm comes
22 During the emergency
23 After the emergency
24 Who to call

3 POWER

What stops when the power stops

Electric utility _____ phone _____

Account number on our bill _____

Our electrician _____ phone _____

Find one before you need one: for a transfer switch or a generator hookup.

The main electric panel is _____

☐ The main breaker is labeled ☐ Every breaker is labeled

☐ We each know how to shut off the main

GO ROOM TO ROOM

WHAT WE COUNT ON	NEEDS POWER?	OUR BACKUP
Water: well pump	☐	
Heat: furnace, boiler, pellet stove	☐	
Septic pump or sump pump	☐	
Refrigerator and freezers	☐	
Cooking	☐	
Lights	☐	
Phone and internet	☐	
Medical equipment	☐	
Garage door	☐	
Barn: waterers, fence, milking	☐	

FOR TWO WEEKS

By day three the water, the freezer and the heat are all in trouble. Give every box you ticked an answer that lasts two weeks.

DOWNED LINES

Treat every downed wire as live. Stay well back, keep others away, and call 911 and your utility.

4 BACKUP POWER

Care for that generator and it will pay you back when you need it.

We have ☐ a portable generator ☐ an automatic standby ☐ a battery or power station ☐ nothing yet

Batteries often go by brand: Jackery, EcoFlow, Anker, Bluetti, Goal Zero, Powerwall.

Make and model _____

Running watts _____ Starting (surge) watts _____

Fuel ☐ gasoline ☐ propane ☐ diesel Tank holds _____

It runs _____ hours on a tank. It is stored _____

Cords are kept _____

It runs here, outdoors _____

It connects by ☐ transfer switch ☐ interlock on the panel ☐ extension cords

TO START IT

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

TO SHUT IT DOWN

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 BACKUP POWER

Running it safely

NEVER — *generators kill with carbon monoxide*

- ✕ **Never run it in a garage, basement, shed or porch,** even with the door open.
- ✕ **Never wire it in yourself or plug it into a wall outlet.** Power fed back into the lines can kill the crew restoring your service.
- ✕ **Never refuel it hot.** Let it cool first.
- ✕ **Never use thin household cords.** They overheat.

ALWAYS

- ✓ **Run it outdoors,** at least 20 feet from the house, with the exhaust pointed away from doors, windows and vents.
- ✓ **Store fuel outside the house.**
- ✓ **Headache, dizziness or nausea?** Get everyone outside, then call 911.

EXTENSION CORDS

- ✓ **Use outdoor-rated cords with thick wire.** The lower the gauge number, the thicker the wire.
- ✓ **12-gauge** for runs up to 50 feet. **10-gauge** for 50 to 100 feet.
- ✓ **The heavy cord from a generator's 30-amp outlet to a transfer switch** is its own purchase. Buy the one made for that outlet.

THINKING OF GETTING ONE?

- ✓ **Ask your electric utility first** about home battery programs.
- ✓ **Hire a licensed electrician;** your town's emergency managers may know one.
- ✓ **Have the critical circuits moved to a subpanel:** pumps, heat, refrigerator, medical equipment.
- ✓ **Size it from the table on page 6,** and decide where it will sit before you buy.

6 BACKUP POWER

What it will run, and the fuel for two weeks

WHAT IT WILL RUN

Look up each one's watts online by its model number, or use the figure for a similar one. A motor needs two to three times its running watts to start. Keep the total under your generator's running watts, with room for the biggest motor to start.

WHAT WE NEED TO RUN	RUNNING WATTS	STARTING WATTS
Well pump		
Furnace or boiler		
Refrigerator		
Freezer		
Septic or sump pump		
Medical equipment		
Lights and chargers		
Total running watts		

FUEL FOR TWO WEEKS

FUEL MATH: AN EXAMPLE

A mid-size portable generator, about 5,000 watts, burns roughly ½ gallon of gasoline an hour at half load.

8 hours a day × ½ gallon = 4 gallons a day × 14 days = 56 gallons

Around the clock: 12 gallons a day × 14 days = 168 gallons

On propane, a 20-pound grill cylinder lasts only 7 to 10 hours.

Ours burns _____ gallons an hour × _____ hours a day

× 14 days = _____ gallons for two weeks. We keep _____

7 BACKUP POWER

Making fuel last, upkeep, and a running log

STRETCH YOUR FUEL

Few homes can safely store two weeks of gasoline, so make it last. Run the generator in blocks, not around the clock: a few hours to pump water, warm the house and chill the freezer, then shut it off.

☐ Stored fuel is stabilized, and rotated every _____ months

UPKEEP

Oil type _____ Change it every _____ hours

Check the manual; many say every 100 hours. A week of steady running is 168 hours, so keep oil, an air filter and a spark plug on hand.

Generator service _____ phone _____

People here who have started it themselves _____

Show everyone who might be home alone, and have each of them do it once.

TEST AND SERVICE LOG

DATE	HOURS ON IT	WHAT WE DID: TEST RUN, OIL, FILTER, PLUG

8 WATER

Most Vermont wells need electricity. No power, no water.

Our water comes from ☐ drilled well ☐ dug well ☐ spring
☐ town or shared system

Does it need electricity? ☐ yes ☐ no, it is gravity-fed

The pump is ☐ submersible, down the well
☐ a jet pump in the house

Pump size _____ HP ☐ 120 V ☐ 240 V Running watts _____

Pump breaker number _____ Pressure tank is _____

The main water shutoff is _____

Well and pump service _____ phone _____

WITH THE POWER OUT, OUR WATER COMES FROM

☐ The generator runs the well pump (page 6)

☐ Stored water: _____ gallons, kept _____

☐ Hand pump, spring or brook (treat it first) _____

☐ A neighbor _____

HOW MUCH TO STORE FOR TWO WEEKS

_____ people × _____ gallons a day × 14 days = _____ gallons

One gallon a person a day is the bare minimum, for drinking and a little cooking: 14 gallons each. Plan on 2 if you can. Washing up, a sick day and hard work all take more. Flushing and animals come on top of that (pages 18 and 14).

THE BATHTUB MATH

Say the tub holds 50 gallons and four people live here.

4 people × 1 gallon = 4 gallons a day. 50 ÷ 4 = about 12 days

4 people × 2 gallons = 8 gallons a day. 50 ÷ 8 = about 6 days

Flush with it and it goes faster: a newer toilet uses about 1.6 gallons a flush. Keep tub water for washing and flushing, and drinking water in jugs.

9 FOOD

Two weeks of meals, with no refrigerator and not much water

We could eat from what is in the house now for _____ days

_____ **people × 3 meals a day × 14 days =** _____ **meals**

Our outage food is kept _____

Special diets, allergies, baby food _____

WHAT TO STOCK

- ✓ **Food you already eat.** Buy a little extra each trip and use the oldest first, so nothing goes to waste.
- ✓ **Meals that need no cooking,** or only hot water: canned meat, fish, beans and fruit, peanut butter, crackers, oatmeal, cereal, shelf-stable milk.
- ✓ **Go easy on salty food.** It makes you thirsty when water is short.
- ✓ **A manual can opener,** and paper plates to save wash water.
- ✓ **Something that feels like a treat.** Two weeks is a long time.
- ✓ **If rotating food is more than you want to manage,** look at freeze-dried emergency meals sold with a 25-year shelf life. They need water, usually hot.

The full list, with how long each thing keeps, is on the laminated supply list.

COOKING WITH NO POWER

We can cook on ☐ a wood stove ☐ a gas range, lit with a match ☐ a camp stove or grill, outdoors

Fuel for it on hand _____ lasts about _____ days

Try lighting the range with the power off before you count on it. Some newer ranges will not light, and most ovens will not.

REFRIGERATOR AND FREEZERS

We have _____ freezers, about _____ full

In a long outage we will ☐ run them on the generator ☐ move food outdoors ☐ cook and share it

10 SAFE TO EAT, SAFE TO DRINK

What keeps, what to throw out, and how to make water safe

FOOD WHEN THE POWER IS OUT

WITH THE DOOR KEPT SHUT	IT STAYS COLD ABOUT
Refrigerator	**4 hours**
Freezer, full	**48 hours**
Freezer, half full	**24 hours**

MAKE IT LAST

Eat from the refrigerator first, then the freezer, then the shelf. Keep the doors shut, and tape them so nobody forgets. In winter, use the giant freezer outdoors: pack food in a cooler or tote outside, below 32°F, where animals can't get at it. Frozen food that still has ice crystals in it is safe to cook or refreeze.

WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT

Throw out meat, eggs, dairy and leftovers that have been above 40°F for more than 2 hours. Never taste food to test it.

Thermometers: ☐ refrigerator, 40°F or below ☐ each freezer, 0°F

WATER YOU CAN DRINK

MAKING WATER SAFE

Bring it to a rolling boil for 1 minute. Or add 8 drops of plain unscented bleach to a gallon, stir, and wait 30 minutes. Treat water from a brook, a spring or the bathtub before you drink it. If floodwater reached your well, don't drink from it until it has been tested.

STORING WATER

Store-bought water keeps until the date on the bottle. Water you bottle yourself, in clean food-grade jugs, should be replaced every 6 months. Write the date on each jug and keep them somewhere cool and dark.

Our jugs were last filled on _____ _____ _____

11 HEAT & FUEL

Most furnaces, boilers and pellet stoves quit when the power does.

Main heat ☐ oil ☐ propane ☐ wood ☐ pellets ☐ heat pump ☐ electric ☐ kerosene

Does it need electricity to run? ☐ yes ☐ no

Backup heat that works with no power _____

Chimney last cleaned _____ Wood on hand _____ cords

FUEL FOR TWO WEEKS

Fuel dealer _____ phone _____

The tank holds _____ gallons. We reorder at _____

The gauge is _____

A full tank lasts about _____ days in January

DON'T RUN IT LOW BEFORE A STORM

Deliveries can stop for days to weeks when roads close, and everyone calls at once when a storm is forecast. Order at half a tank, and keep the path to the fill pipe shoveled.

The fuel shutoff at the tank is _____

The furnace emergency switch (red plate) is _____

Heating service _____ phone _____

CARBON MONOXIDE AND FIRE

- Never heat the house with a gas range, a grill or a camp stove.
- Never burn in a chimney that has not been inspected.
- Keep furnace, heater and dryer vents clear of snow. A blocked vent sends carbon monoxide back inside.
- Keep 3 feet clear around stoves and heaters. Ashes go in a covered metal can.

12 STAYING WARM

With the heat out, the cold itself is the danger.

OUR WARM ROOM

If the heat is out, we will all live in _____

Seal off the other rooms with plastic sheeting, blankets and duct tape.

☐ Smoke and CO alarms have battery backup. Tested _____

TOO COLD: KNOW THE SIGNS

Hypothermia: shivering, exhaustion, confusion, fumbling hands, memory loss, slurred speech, drowsiness. In a baby: bright red, cold skin and very low energy. A body temperature below 95°F is an emergency: get medical help right away. It can happen above 40°F when someone is wet and chilled.

Frostbite: numbness, and white or grayish-yellow skin that feels firm or waxy. The person may not feel it. Get to a warm room and warm the skin with body heat or warm water. No heating pad, stove or rubbing: numb skin burns easily.

Signs and first steps from the CDC and Ready.gov.

IN DEEP WINTER

- ☐ Dress in layers. Take one off before you sweat; add one before you chill.
- ☐ Shovel as the snow falls. Don't let it pile up, melt and refreeze.
- ☐ Sand icy steps and walks
- ☐ Rake heavy snow off the roof from the ground, never alone
- ☐ Keep furnace, heater and dryer vents clear
- ☐ Store food outside, below 32°F, where animals can't get it
- ☐ Trickle the hot and cold taps and open sink cabinets
- ☐ If the cold goes on with no heat, shut off the water main and drain the pipes

13 PEOPLE

Who depends on us, where they are, and what they need

WHERE OUR PEOPLE ARE

WHO	WHERE: SCHOOL, DAYCARE, WORK, CARE	PHONE THERE

Ask each school and daycare about its pick-up plan.

HEALTH AND MEDICAL NEEDS

Medicines we cannot miss _____

_____

☐ We keep two weeks extra ☐ Some must stay cold: _____

Extra medicine is hard to get in a hurry. Ask your doctor and pharmacist ahead of time what they can do, then use the oldest first so none of it expires.

Powered equipment (oxygen, CPAP) _____ Battery ____ hrs

☐ Our electric utility knows someone here depends on it

☐ Signed up for CARE so local responders know our needs: **e911.vermont.gov/care**

Help someone would need to get out _____

Doctor _____ phone _____

Pharmacy _____ phone _____

Insurance cards and our medicine list are kept _____

If we could not stay home, we would go to _____

If you depend on care such as dialysis, go early or line up a room near it.

For two weeks: count the pills, and refill a low bottle before the roads close. First aid kits and classes are on page 15.

14 ANIMALS

Pets and livestock need a two-week plan too.

PETS

Our pets _____

_____

Food on hand _____ days. Their medicines _____

☐ Leash and crate for each

☐ A photo of each, to prove they are ours

Vet _____ phone _____

LIVESTOCK

Kind and number _____

_____

They drink _____ gallons a day × 14 days = _____ gallons

With no power we water them by _____

Feed and hay on hand _____ days. Bedding _____

Needs power ☐ heated waterers ☐ fence charger ☐ milking ☐ barn fans

Our backup for those _____

Who can do chores if we can't _____

Their phone _____ Large-animal vet _____

WATER IS THE HARD PART

Animals drink far more than people do, and a well with no power gives none. Work out now how you would pump it or haul it, and from where.

FOR TWO WEEKS

The feed store and the delivery truck stop when the roads do. Through the winter, keep two weeks of feed and hay ahead.

15 FIRST AID

When the roads are closed, help can be a long time coming.

Our first aid kit is kept _____ restocked on _____

WHAT TO KEEP

FOR EVERYDAY INJURIES

- ☐ Disposable nitrile gloves, hand sanitizer
- ☐ Gauze pads and rolls, bandages, medical tape
- ☐ Elastic wraps, a moldable splint (SAM splint), a blister kit
- ☐ Instant cold packs, and heat packs you boil to reset
- ☐ Emergency blankets
- ☐ Tweezers, shears, thermometer

FOR SERIOUS BLEEDING

- ☐ A Stop the Bleed kit: tourniquet, packing gauze, pressure bandage, gloves, shears

Buy it from the Stop the Bleed program itself, at **stopthebleed.org**. Cheap copies sold online can fail when it counts.

FROM THE PHARMACY SHELF

- ☐ Pain and fever reducer, allergy medicine, antacid, anti-diarrheal, rehydration salts

KEEP IT SIMPLE, AND KEEP IT FRESH

- Stock what someone here knows how to use. Gear nobody has trained on does not help.
- First aid supplies expire, even sterile gauze, in about 3 to 5 years. Check the dates each fall and replace what you use.

CLASSES WORTH TAKING

- ☐ **Stop the Bleed.** How to stop life-threatening bleeding. Hands-on and often free. Find a class at stopthebleed.org.
- ☐ **First aid and CPR.** The American Red Cross (redcross.org), or ask your rescue squad or fire department.
- ☐ **Wilderness first aid.** For when help is hours away. SOLO in Conway, NH (www.soloschools.com) teaches it and sells a pocket Wilderness First Aid Map for its graduates. A free online course is at openwfa.com.

Who here is trained, and when _____

16 STAYING IN TOUCH

Phone, internet, alerts and news

WHERE DOES YOUR TOWN POST NEWS?

Find out now and write it **inside the front cover**. Most towns use some of these: Front Porch Forum, a town Facebook page or group, the town website, an email list, the notice board at the store or town office.

PHONE AND INTERNET

Home phone ☐ copper landline ☐ over fiber, cable or internet ☐ none

A phone that runs over fiber, cable or internet stops when the power does, unless its box has a battery. So does Wi-Fi calling.

Battery on the modem or fiber box? ☐ no ☐ yes: _____ hours

Cell signal at home ☐ good ☐ spotty ☐ none

Nearest sure signal _____

We can charge phones from ☐ a vehicle ☐ a power bank ☐ the generator ☐ solar

ALERTS

The battery or crank radio is kept _____

Station for local news _____

☐ Signed up for VT-Alert at **vtalert.gov**

☐ Weather warnings are turned on

IF THE PHONES ARE DOWN

We get word to each other by _____

We leave notes for each other at _____

FOR TWO WEEKS

Cell towers run on backup power that can run out in a long outage. A text often gets through when a call will not. Agree now on a plan that needs no phone at all.

17 NEIGHBORS & ROADS

In a long outage, neighbors are the help that is already here.

Know your neighbors and work together. Trade phone numbers now, and agree who checks on whom.

NEIGHBORS

We check on _____ phone _____

_____ phone _____

_____ phone _____

They check on us _____ phone _____

_____ phone _____

> **DON'T BECOME THE SECOND EMERGENCY**
> Don't cross a downed line, moving water or bad ice to reach someone. Go in pairs, and tell someone where you are going. If you can't get there safely, call 911.

WHO NEARBY HAS

a tractor or plow _____

a chainsaw, and knows how to use it _____

a generator _____

medical training _____

ROADS

Our road is ☐ town-maintained ☐ Class 4 or private

Driveway plowed by _____ phone _____

If our road or bridge is out, the other way out is _____

_____

☐ A fire truck or ambulance could get up our driveway in winter

18 PLUMBING

Where the water goes when the power is out

Our septic system is ☐ gravity, no pump
☐ pumped (pump station or mound) ☐ town sewer ☐ not sure yet

The pump and its alarm panel are _____ Breaker ____

The tank cover is (mark it on the map) _____

Last pumped _____ by _____

Sump pump? ☐ yes ☐ no Its backup _____

GRAVITY OR PUMPED?

A gravity system keeps working without power as long as you have water to flush with: pour a bucket quickly into the bowl. A pumped system does not. The pump chamber fills, and then it backs up into the house. Use as little water as you can, and find out how much reserve the chamber holds.

WORST CASE, USE A BUCKET

Two weeks of flushing takes more water than two weeks of drinking. If you can't spare it, line a 5-gallon bucket with a heavy trash bag, add sawdust, wood ash or cat litter after each use, and keep the tied bag outside.

NOTES

19 FROZEN PIPES

Keeping them from freezing, and what to do if the heat stays off

The pipes most likely to freeze are _____

Deep cold and no heat: open the cabinet doors under sinks and let the hot and cold taps trickle. **If it goes on, or you have to leave:** shut off the water main and drain every faucet. Have a plumber show you how once, then write the steps below.

Water heater ☐ electric ☐ propane ☐ oil ☐ heat pump

Its shutoff is _____

Shut the water heater off before you drain the pipes.

TO DRAIN OUR PIPES

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

7 _____

8 _____

Our plumber _____ phone _____

NEVER THAW PIPES WITH A TORCH

Use slow heat: hot water bottles, warm towels or handwarmers, starting at the faucet end. The fire department may not be able to reach a burning house.

20 THROUGH THE YEAR

What to do, and when to do it

EVERY FALL

- ☐ Show everyone how to run the generator and transfer switch safely, and where the tools and the outage bucket are
- ☐ Check the dates on stored food, water, fuel, medicine and batteries. Eat what is close to its date, and replace it.
- ☐ Chimneys cleaned and inspected
- ☐ Generator: change the oil, then run it until it is warm
- ☐ Winter tires on, tread checked
- ☐ Pipes insulated; outside faucets shut off and drained
- ☐ Get sand for the driveway. Most town garages have a pile; bring a bucket and shovel.
- ☐ Check the winter supplies: shovel, roof rake, salt, handwarmers
- ☐ Walk through the workbook again
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

ALL YEAR

- ☐ Keep the drainage around the house clear and in repair
- ☐ Deal with trees that could fall on the house, the lines or the road
- ☐ Refill vehicles and fuel tanks at half, not at empty. You can't always get more.
- ☐ Test smoke and CO alarms
- ☐ Talk with neighbors about how you would help each other
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

EVERY _____

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

EVERY _____

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

FALL CHECK-UP DONE _____

Year _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

21 WHEN A STORM COMES

Before it, during it, and when the lights come back

WHEN A STORM IS COMING

- ☐ Watch the forecast and your alerts
- ☐ Gas up the vehicles, fill the fuel cans, check the grill's propane tank
- ☐ Order fuel if the tank is under half
- ☐ Do the dishes and laundry, bathe, fill the tub
- ☐ Fill a thermos with hot water
- ☐ Lay out headlamps, solar lights and candles
- ☐ Charge phones and power banks
- ☐ Run the generator to check it
- ☐ Know where the shelter is. If you need care such as dialysis, go early.

WHEN THE POWER GOES OUT

- ☐ Tape the refrigerator and freezer shut
- ☐ Stay away from downed lines
- ☐ Report the outage to your utility
- ☐ Switch off electric heaters, the range and the water heater so they don't all restart at once
- ☐ Move into your warm room and seal off the rest
- ☐ Check on your neighbors

WHEN IT COMES BACK

- ☐ Throw out food that warmed up
- ☐ Restock batteries, fuel and supplies
- ☐ Note what you would do differently

OUTAGE LOG

WENT OUT	CAME BACK	WHAT WE RAN SHORT OF, OR WISHED WE HAD

FOR TWO WEEKS

The first day is the easy one. Ration fuel, water and effort from the start as if it will last two weeks. You can always ease off when the lights come back.

22 DURING THE EMERGENCY

It may take days. Be patient. Be nice.

DO

- ✓ Stay calm and stay safe. Move slower than usual and think each job through.
- ✓ Drink water and eat well.
- ✓ Lift and shovel the right way, and rest often.
- ✓ Check on your neighbors. Help each other.
- ✓ Turn off the water, gas or electricity if you need to (map inside the back cover).
- ✓ If you can't keep warm, leave early for a neighbor's, a warming place or the shelter.

DO NOT MAKE YOUR OWN EMERGENCY

Fire trucks, ambulances and police may not be able to get to you, and help may not come in time. **Do not:**

- ✗ Eat spoiled food
- ✗ Drink bad water
- ✗ Go near downed power lines
- ✗ Run a generator indoors, or wire one in yourself
- ✗ Heat the house with a gas stove or grill
- ✗ Burn in a chimney that has not been inspected
- ✗ Thaw pipes with a torch
- ✗ Take chances with ladders, roof rakes or chainsaws
- ✗ Overexert. Shoveling can bring on a heart attack.

HELP YOUR TOWN

In Vermont the town usually runs the shelter, with the Red Cross lending a hand, and a small town runs on volunteers. The best time to offer is before the storm.

- ☐ Tell your Emergency Management Director, fire department or road crew what you can do: check on neighbors, staff the shelter, cook, run a chainsaw or a tractor, lend a generator
- ☐ Take first aid, CPR and Stop the Bleed classes (page 15)

23 AFTER THE EMERGENCY

First steps, and what we learned

FIRST

- ☐ Take photos of the damage and the spoiled food before you clean up. Keep receipts.
- ☐ **Report damage to Vermont 211:** dial 2-1-1 or go to vermont211.org. Report small losses too. The state uses these reports to ask for federal disaster help.
- ☐ Tell your town's Emergency Management Director (inside the front cover) and call your insurance company.

Damage reported to 211 on _____

FEMA number _____

Insurance claim number _____

Adjuster _____ phone _____

Our nearest food shelf _____ open _____

WHAT WE WOULD DO DIFFERENTLY

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

NEXT STEPS

- ☐ Fill in the **Vermont Family Emergency Preparedness Workbook**. Find it at vem.vermont.gov, or call Vermont Emergency Management at 800-347-0488 for a free copy.
- ☐ Stock an emergency kit in your car
- ☐ Make an evacuation plan and pack a go bag
- ☐ Keep what FEMA will ask for with your papers: Social Security number, insurance policy, bank account number

24 WHO TO CALL

Help for those it hit harder than they expected

FEMA DISASTER ASSISTANCE — 800-621-3362

Opens only after a federal disaster is declared for your county; your Emergency Management Director will know. Apply at DisasterAssistance.gov or by phone, 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. every day.

3SQUARESVT: MONEY FOR GROCERIES — 800-479-6151

Apply at dcf.vermont.gov, or call for a paper application. Already on it and lost food to a fire, a flood or an outage of 4 hours or more? Call within 10 days of losing the food to ask for replacement benefits; don't wait for the power to come back. Return the form they send within 10 days. For help applying, call Vermont Foodbank at 855-855-6181.

FUEL ASSISTANCE — Your town clerk

Help with heating bills is often handled by the town, so start with your town clerk. The state's Seasonal Fuel Assistance pays part of the winter bill for households under an income limit: dcf.vermont.gov/benefits/fuel.

CRISIS FUEL AND CAPSTONE — 800-639-1053

Nearly out of fuel and can't pay? Call your community action agency **before** the tank is empty. In central Vermont that is Capstone Community Action (Randolph office 802-728-9506), which also helps with emergency food and applications. Elsewhere, dial 2-1-1 to find yours. Furnace quit after hours in winter: 877-295-7998.

FOOD SHELVES — 800-585-2265

Vermont Foodbank lists food shelves and meal sites at vtfoodbank.org. Or dial 2-1-1.

DISASTER DISTRESS HELPLINE — 800-985-5990

Call or text at any hour to talk with a counselor about the strain. In a crisis, 9-8-8.

MORE HELP

ready.gov · **vem.vermont.gov** · **emergency.cdc.gov** · **vtalert.gov**

HOME MAP & SHUTOFFS

Sketch the house and yard, then mark where things are. In an emergency, anyone should be able to find them from this page.

MARK THESE ON THE MAP

- **E** Electric panel and main breaker
- **F** Fuel shutoff: oil or propane
- **X** Fire extinguishers
- **B** Outage bucket, flashlights
- **P** Well head or pump
- **W** Main water shutoff
- **G** Generator spot, 20 feet out
- **+** First aid kit
- **S** Septic tank cover
- **M** Where we meet outside

IN WORDS, IN CASE THE SKETCH IS NOT ENOUGH

Electric main _____

Water main _____

Fuel shutoff _____

911

FIRE · AMBULANCE · POLICE
ANY EMERGENCY

Tell them where you are. Our 911 address: _____

_____

VERMONT

2-1-1	Vermont 211: shelter, food and other help
5-1-1	Road and travel conditions
9-8-8	Mental health crisis line
800-222-1222	Poison Center

OUR TOWN, FOR NON-EMERGENCIES

Fire department _____

Ambulance _____

Police _____

Electric utility _____

Fuel dealer _____

Nearest emergency shelter _____

OUR PEOPLE

Neighbor _____

Doctor _____

In case of emergency, call _____

Out-of-state contact _____

Where our family meets _____

VT-Alert: sign up for your town's alerts at vtalert.gov.

Local woodchuck know-how from central Vermont. A collaboration of the towns of Tunbridge and Royalton and the Two Rivers-Ottauquechee Regional Commission (TRORC). Written by James McGuire, Brenda Field, Ari Lattanzi and Brad Salzmann. Special thanks to Kevin Geiger. Cover illustration from a photograph by James McGuire. November 2026.

More copies? Ideas? Email info@knowyoursystems.org. We'll print them for your town.