

## **Preparing for Ice Storms and Power Outages**

January can be a pretty cold month in our state, and North Carolinians are no strangers to snow and ice storms. Unfortunately, bad winter weather can sometimes lead to power outages, but a little prep work now could make the winter weather season easier to endure.

To prepare for an ice storm, be sure to have the proper supplies handy. Flashlights and extra batteries are essential to your winter weather supply kit. Include a battery-powered radio in your supply kit so that you can listen to the weather forecast during an outage. Be sure to keep extra clothes and blankets in your emergency kit to stay warm if the power goes out, and remember to have a first aid kit handy. Cordless phones will not work if the power goes out, so always keep one corded phone in your home.

Many grocery and convenience stores may be closed or inaccessible after an ice storm, so stock up on non-perishable foods before the storm arrives and make sure that you have a manual can opener that can be used to open canned food during a power outage. Keep plenty of bottled water in your home. Fill your gas tank before the storm, and if you take any prescription medications, be sure to have at least one week's supply available. Having all of these supplies on hand before an ice storm or power outage will make the experience less stressful.

To keep your home safe, make sure that all of the batteries in your smoke alarm are working properly. Also, be sure that you have fire extinguishers in your home and teach each resident the proper way to use them. If you are without electricity and use a portable generator, follow the generator's safety guidelines to avoid carbon monoxide emissions, burns and possible electrocution. If you have questions about generator safety, call your electric cooperative.

Although ice storms that result in power outages can be frustrating, preparing both your home and your family will help ease the frustration when storms hit.