

# Safety Tips



One of our goals at Con Edison is to provide a safe, accident-free environment for our customers and our employees. Here are a few tips that could save your life.

## Preparing your family for a storm

- Never touch or go near fallen wires, even if you think they are safe.
- Have a battery powered radio and a supply of extra batteries handy.
- Fill spare containers with water for cooking and washing.
- Have flashlights available for every member of your household.
- Do not use charcoal to cook indoors. It gives off deadly carbon monoxide gas.
- If you're in a car that comes in contact with a fallen wire, don't get out of the car or attempt to move it. The rubber tires will provide insulation to protect you until help arrives.

## Electrical safety at home

- Check electrical cords for worn spots or frayed wires. Don't mend it...replace it! Homemade repairs are a common source of fires.
- Use extension cords sparingly. Too many appliances plugged into one-cord causes overheating. Overheated wires start one of every six home fires.
- Don't use multi-plug sockets. Check behind your TV. Are the VCR, CD player, cable box, stereo, and tape deck all plugged into each other? Before you add that video game ask yourself, "Am I playing with fire?"
- Keep flammable materials away from lamps and heaters. Place electric heaters away from well-traveled areas where someone might trip and fall.
- Place electrical appliances a safe distance from sinks and tubs.
- "Playing Around Power Poles and Equipment can be Deadly" provides more information on electrical safety.
- Wherever electricity is used — inside or out, on the street or in the home — the risk of an electrical fire or shock exists. Con Edison's brochure Electric Safety: What You Need to Know, outlines the rules and safeguards that will help you prevent electrical accidents.

## Gas safety at home

- Never extinguish a pilot light. Blowing out the pilot doesn't stop gas from flowing out. Don't create a gas leak to save a few pennies.
- Do not try to heat rooms with your range or oven. It isn't designed for space heating and using it for this purpose can cause a fire or reduced oxygen levels in rooms and a build up of lethal carbon monoxide gas.
- For more information about gas safety, read A Message About Gas Safety (PDF format).
- Learn more about natural gas detectors by visiting [www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/smelltaste/gasdtctr.asp](http://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/smelltaste/gasdtctr.asp)

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## Storm Checklist

If a major storm is anticipated in your area, take these simple precautions to ensure your readiness. Use this page as a checklist.

- Have a lights-out kit that is well stocked and handy. The kit should have a battery-operated radio or TV, several flashlights, and a supply of fresh batteries. Local radio stations will report weather and utility service conditions.
- Turn your refrigerator and freezer to their coldest settings.
- If you have a well and a water pump, fill your bathtub and spare containers with water.
- Protect your major appliances and any electronically-sensitive equipment, such as computers.
- Fill your car's gas tank.

If you do lose power:

- Call Con Edison immediately to report the outage at 1-800-75-CONED (1-800-752-6633).
- Take steps to prevent food spoilage. See the information below for tips on handling food and water.
- Stay indoors. If you must go outside, stay away from downed and dangling lines. Treat all downed lines as if they are live and dangerous.
- If you use a portable generator, follow its important, life-saving instructions. See the information below for more information on generators.
- Listen to your battery-operated radio on for updates on our restoration progress and safety tips.
- Use candles and storm lanterns carefully. Keep them out of drafts, away from flammable materials, and out of the reach of children.

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## Proper Identification

"Who's there?" The answer, "Con Edison," has opened a lot of doors. We built up trust over the years; however, we live in changing times. Recently there have been reports of criminals posing as Con Edison employees trying to get into homes. All of our employees carry a photo I.D. card. Don't open your door until you see it! If you have any doubt, please call the number on your Con Edison bill to get verification or call the police at 911.

## Be Aware of Extreme Weather Dangers

People with serious medical conditions and seniors need to be extra careful during both the summer and the winter.

**In Summer:** Extreme heat may cause hyperthermia. This is the general term given to a variety of heat-related illnesses, like sun stress or sunstroke. Here are some tips to help you avoid hyperthermia:

- Stay in an air-conditioned room if possible. (Fans work, too, if it's not a very humid day.)
- Drink plenty of liquids, like water or juice. Avoid alcohol or caffeinated beverages.
- Ventilate your rooms.
- Take plenty of baths or use cool compresses.

Some signs of heat-related illness are nausea, dizziness, weakness, muscle cramps, pale and clammy skin, a throbbing headache, or disorientation.

**In Winter:** Prolonged exposure to the cold can trigger hypothermia, a life-threatening drop in body temperature. Here are a few tips to help you avoid hypothermia:

- Stay indoors whenever possible. Icy patches make walking hazardous, and brisk winds cause more rapid heat loss.
- Dress warmly. Clothing insulates best when worn in layers.
- Wear a hat.
- Keep dry. Change out of wet clothing immediately.

Some symptoms of hypothermia are confusion, drowsiness, slow or irregular heartbeat, slurred speech, a weak pulse, low blood pressure, uncontrollable shivering, and lack of shivering, or stiff muscles.

**Whenever it's very hot or very cold, please check on friends and neighbors to see that they are okay. If symptoms of weather-related illnesses develop, seek immediate medical attention.**

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## Handling food and water in an emergency

It's important to handle food and water safely for the health and protection of you and your family. If you lose electric service, keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible. Each time the door is opened, heat enters and speeds the thawing process.

Food will stay frozen between 36 and 48 hours in a fully loaded freezer with the door closed. If the freezer is only half full, the food will generally keep for 24 hours. A freezer full of meat usually stays frozen longer than a freezer full of baked goods. During the winter, you can keep food fresh for a longer period by storing it in a cold place outside your home, such as an unheated garage or tool shed.

If you find it necessary to heat or cook food, use your fireplace, an outdoor grill, or a can of Sterno® placed in a proper holder on a fireproof surface. Propane-burning camp stoves should only be used with proper ventilation, and charcoal must be burned only outdoors.

Water service to many homes is supplied by electric pumps that pump the water directly out of the ground or, in the case of large apartment buildings, pump it to a tank on the roof. If your water service depends on electrical equipment, take the precaution of filling spare containers with water for cooking and washing.

## Emergency generators

Portable generators designed to supply electricity to homes or businesses during a power outage can be extremely dangerous if not used properly. Before connecting a portable generator, it is vital to disconnect your internal electric wiring from Con Edison's service by opening the main circuit breaker switch or other main disconnect device. Otherwise, power from the generator can go out over the utility lines, energizing broken lines and endangering the lives of workers making repairs. You also risk damaging your electric circuits, damaging the generator, or causing a fire.

Any permanently installed emergency generator must be installed by a qualified electrician and inspected by Con Edison. It must have a properly installed switch to disconnect your interior wiring from the utility service so that the generator cannot energize our lines. Please call the phone number on your bill and ask to speak to a commercial service representative if you have questions about installing an emergency generator.