

Surviving A Heating And Power Failure

Power Grid Failure

An power failure in the winter would cause every furnace based heating system in the affected area to fail. This includes most town and city homes and many rural homes near these communities. Many people with wood furnaces are under the misconception that because they heat with wood that they would be OK. Such is not the case. Without electricity to run the controls and the fan, wood furnaces are just as dead as electric ones! I have heard other people say they have a power plant for emergency backup. The typical 1.5 to 2.2 KW power plant found in hardware stores will not start a furnace fan.

Natural Gas Supply Failure

A failure of the natural gas distribution system would have similar results. People with oil, electric, and wood furnaces would be OK for a while but when people started getting cold, they would turn on electric stoves and heaters. The result would be a power grid overloaded and it too would fail.

Sharing To Survive

Those of us with stand-alone heating systems that don't require electricity (or natural gas) would suddenly have a lot of friends! If the guests don't come prepared, the hosts would quickly run out of supplies! This document is a guide to the hosts so they know what to ask the guests to bring and conversely to the guests so they know what to take with them. A list follows but first some things to think about.

Disposal System

One important item that must not be overlooked is the sewage disposal system. A residential field system is designed for a single family with occasional weekend guests. It will not sustain several families for a week or more. If you live in a rural area and are in a position to be an emergency host, install an outhouse! As a side benefit, you will be thankful for it if you have trouble with your disposal system or if your water pump quits. It doesn't even have to be near the house. Build it back in the bush but **build it!**

Water Supply

We can't survive without water. In the winter you can melt snow and boil some of it for drinking water if you have to. If possible, have a power plant that will run your pump so you can periodically refill the cold and hot water tanks and water containers. Remember that most deep well pumps are wired directly to the power panel and they run on 240vac. Most small power plants supply only 120vac! One solution is to install a 240 volt 15 amp outlet and plug the pump into it. That way you can unplug the pump from its grid supply and plug it into the power plant with a suitable 240vac extension cord. Before buying a power plant, try running your pump on

a friends' power plant This will give you an idea of the minimum size that is necessary to start your pump. Remember that the starting surge can stall a small power plant and the bigger the pump, the harder it is to start.

Food Storage

In winter, a freezer full of food put outside in a shaded area will stay frozen for months. In summer, you'd better have a shady spot picked out and a good supply of fuel and oil for your power plant!

Supply List

- Hand soap
- Hand towels
- Wash cloths
- Dish soap
- Dish cloths
- Dish towels
- Food *
- Indoor clothing
- Facial tissue
- Toilet tissue
- Personal hygiene
- Medication
- First aid
- Mattress to sleep on the floor
- Bedding (sleeping bags)
- Outdoor clothing (seasonal)
- Fuel for power plants, cooking, emergency travel etc. *
gasoline, diesel fuel, propane, kerosene naphtha
(camp fuel), engine oil

** If an extended outage is expected, take as much food and fuel of all kinds as you can transport!*

Other Considerations

- Supply of dishes and chairs
- Entertainment activities for children and adults
- Sharing the daily work load
- Keep busy by helping with your hosts work projects



Related documents:

*Communicating Without The Power Grid
What Is An EOC?
An EOC Communication Room*

These documents may be reproduced only for **free** distribution to emergency response volunteers. For other uses, contact the author (Graig Pearen) by e-mail at: gpearen@telus.net or by fax at 250-560-5679