FLORIDA HURRICANE POWER CHECKLIST

THE OUTAGE LAB · theoutagelab.com · Print it. Stick it on the fridge. Work it top to bottom.

Hurricanes knock out power. How you handle the first hour — and the days after — decides whether an outage is an inconvenience or a disaster. This checklist covers the 72 hours before landfall, the first hour of the outage, riding out multiple days, and the safety rules that are not negotiable.

BEFORE THE STORM — 48–72 HOURS OUT

- ☐ **Charge everything.** Phones, laptops, power banks, rechargeable lanterns, and your portable power station — top them all to 100% while the grid is up.
- ☐ **Freeze water.** Fill and freeze water bottles and zip bags. They become ice packs for the fridge, then drinking water as they melt.
- ☐ **Turn the fridge down.** Set the fridge to 34–36°F and the freezer to 0°F now, so food starts the outage as cold as possible.
- ☐ **Fuel up the generator.** Fresh gasoline plus stabilizer if it has been sitting; check the oil. Stage cans away from the house, never inside it.
- ☐ **Buy the safety gear.** A battery-powered CO detector on every floor is the single most important generator accessory you can own.
- ☐ **Know your runtime.** A 1kWh power station runs a modern fridge roughly 8–12 hours; 2kWh roughly doubles that. Our sizing guide shows the math.
- ☐ **Prep medical devices.** CPAP users: charge your backup battery now and know your machine's draw. Call your DME provider before the storm if you are unsure.
- ☐ **Cash, meds, documents.** ATMs and card readers die with the grid. Pack cash, a week's meds, and IDs/insurance papers in a waterproof bag.

WHEN THE POWER GOES OUT — THE FIRST HOUR

- ☐ **Unplug the big stuff.** TVs, computers, and major appliances — unplug them or flip their surge strips off. Leave one lamp on so you know the instant power returns. The surge when the grid comes back kills more electronics than the outage itself.
- ☐ **Fridge stays CLOSED.** Every open door costs you cold. A closed fridge holds safe temps about 4 hours; a full freezer about 48 hours (24 if half-full).
- ☐ **Switch to LED light.** Lanterns and headlamps, not candles. If you must use candles, never leave them unattended.
- ☐ **Start the generator — OUTSIDE.** See the CO rules below. This is the step people get wrong, and it is the one that kills.
- ☐ **Text, don't call.** Texts get through congested networks when calls won't. Check in with one out-of-state contact and relay through them.
- ☐ **Check on neighbors.** Elderly neighbors and anyone on powered medical equipment first.
- ☐ **Report the outage.** Use your utility's app or outage line — then assume days, not hours, and plan for it.

RIDING OUT A MULTI-DAY OUTAGE

- ☐ **Run the fridge in intervals.** On a power station, don't run the fridge 24/7. Pre-cool it, run 2–3 hours to pull temps down, then unplug and keep the door shut. This can stretch a 2kWh station across 2–3 days.
- ☐ **Rotate your loads.** Fridge block, then phones and fans, then lights. One thing at a time roughly doubles your runtime versus everything at once.
- ☐ **Beat the Florida heat.** The outage's second danger is heat. Shade, wet towels, battery fans, cool showers. Check on anyone elderly twice a day.

- ☐ **Use the car as a charger, not a generator.** Charge phones from the car — but never idle it in the garage, even with the door open. The CO rules apply to cars too.
- ☐ **Conserve water.** On a well pump with no power, you have no water. Fill the tub before the storm for flushing and washing.
- ☐ **Pool pump owners:** a pool pump is one of the hungriest loads in the house. Run it in short cycles or leave it off — don't let it eat your backup power.
- ☐ **Keep a power log.** Note when you started the generator and how much fuel you've burned. Running dry at 2am is how mistakes happen.

GENERATOR SAFETY — THE CO RULES (READ THIS TWICE)

Carbon monoxide is odorless and colorless, and one of the leading causes of death after a hurricane (CPSC). Every rule below is non-negotiable:

1. 20+ feet from the house, exhaust pointed AWAY from the home. Not the garage, not the porch, not under a window — even with doors open.

2. Battery CO alarm on every floor while the generator runs.

3. Cool down before refueling. Shut it off, wait 15+ minutes, then refuel. Gasoline on a hot engine is a fire.

4. Never backfeed. Don't plug a generator into a wall outlet to "power the house" — it energizes lines utility crews believe are dead. Use a transfer switch installed by a licensed electrician, or run extension cords directly to appliances.

5. Dry ground, dry hands. Keep the generator on high, dry ground, protected from rain; never operate with wet hands.

If a CO alarm sounds: get everyone outside immediately, call 911, and don't re-enter until cleared. Headache, dizziness, or nausea in a house with a running generator means get out first, diagnose later.

FOOD SAFETY — QUICK REFERENCE (FDA RULES)

- **Fridge above 40°F for 2+ hours?** Discard perishables — meat, dairy, eggs, leftovers. When in doubt, throw it out.
- **Freezer food still has ice crystals?** It is safe to refreeze or cook.
- **Never taste food to check it.** You can't taste the bacteria that make you sick.
- **A $10 fridge thermometer removes all guesswork.** It is the cheapest item on this page and settles every argument.

THE OUTAGE KIT — OWN IT BEFORE JUNE 1

- ☐ **Portable power station, 1–2kWh** (fridge + phones + fans) — our picks: EcoFlow Delta 2, Jackery Explorer 1000 v2, Anker Solix C1000 Gen 2
- ☐ **Inverter generator, 2,200W+** — runs the fridge indefinitely on gas. See our hurricane generator picks.
- ☐ **Battery-powered CO detectors** — one per floor.
- ☐ **LED lanterns + headlamps** — skip the candles.
- ☐ **20,000mAh+ power banks** — one per phone.
- ☐ **Fridge thermometer.**
- ☐ **5-gallon gas cans + stabilizer,** stored outside the living space.
- ☐ **Heavy-duty outdoor extension cords** (12-gauge, 50 ft).
- ☐ **Battery or hand-crank NOAA weather radio.**

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