

10. What You Need to Know About Your Utilities



NW Natural®
We grew up here.

Natural gas

Your gas company adds an odorant into your gas before it is distributed, which smells like sulfur or rotten eggs. The odorant is highly concentrated so even the smallest amount of natural gas can be detected. Any odor of natural gas inside your home may indicate a leak. If you smell natural gas or hear a blowing or hissing sound, remember: Smell. Go. Let us know. (See p. 12 for information on how to turn off natural gas in your home.)

- ☐ Leave the area immediately.
- ☐ Don't try to find the leak.
- ☐ Don't use phones, light switches, or electronic devices that have a battery: they can create a spark.
- ☐ Don't use candles, matches or lighters.
- ☐ Don't start a car near a natural gas odor and don't use your garage door opener.
- ☐ Once you're away, call NW Natural at 800-882-3377 or your local gas company.

Electricity

If the power goes off:

- ☐ Check your fuse or breaker box for blown fuses or tripped circuits. If they're okay, check to see if your neighbors are without power.
- ☐ Call your power company immediately to report the outage. Please call only once so other customers can get through. Some utilities, like PGE, offer ways to report outages online or by text.
- ☐ Turn off all electrical equipment including your water heater, electric furnace or heaters, stove, washer and dryer, stereo and TV, to help prevent overloading the system when power is restored (major appliances can be turned off at the breaker box).
- ☐ Turn on a porch light and one inside light so you and repair crews will know when service is restored.
- ☐ Keep refrigerators and freezers closed to minimize food loss.
- ☐ Listen to the radio or check social media, or your power company's website for updates on major outages. If your neighbor's power comes back on but yours does not, call your power company again.
- ☐ If your lights are very dim or very bright once power is restored, turn off the power at the breaker or fuse box and call your power company.



Portland General Electric

Downed power line safety

You cannot see electricity—a downed line doesn't have to spark to be live. And a wire can be dangerous even if you're not touching it: The electricity from a wire can be conducted through other things touching the wire, such as water, metal, tree branches, concrete and other materials. Stay far back from any downed lines, and keep other people and pets away, too. When you see a downed line, take the following precautions:

- ☐ Don't touch it! Call your electric utility, immediately to report any downed utility line.
- ☐ If a line is touching a person, call 9-1-1 and stay away; you could become a victim if you touch the person. If a line falls across your vehicle, stay in the vehicle until help arrives. If you have to get out of the vehicle due to a fire, or other life-threatening situation, jump clear of the car with both feet together, making sure not to touch the car and the ground at the same time. Then, keeping your feet together at all times, shuffle or hop far away from the car and power line.
- ☐ Keep on the lookout for crews repairing downed lines. Slow down near work areas and always obey flaggers.

Generator safety

Owners of portable or auxiliary generators should note these precautions:

- ☐ Never plug your generator into a wall outlet. It can result in injury to you or others and damage to your electrical system.
- ☐ Portable generators are gasoline-powered and should always be operated outside away from doors, windows and your garage. Use an outdoor-rated, grounded (three-prong) extension cord to connect your generator to an appliance.
- ☐ Gas-powered generators can become very hot during operation. Use extreme caution to avoid burns and let the engine cool before you refuel.
- ☐ Notify your power company if you have a permanent generator. Permanently-installed auxiliary generators must meet electrical codes and have a transfer switch to prevent dangerous back-feed of electricity into power lines.
- ☐ If a family member depends on medical life-support equipment, a back-up generator is important to consider in case of an extended power outage.