

You Can Have the Power!

Keeping the lights on and the batteries charged

When the power goes off, some folks panic, some sigh and wait it out, and some are prepared. With a little bit of planning, you can be one of the prepared.

Keeping your lights on

“Power Outage Light Bulbs” or “Emergency Rechargeable Light Bulbs” are light bulbs that fit into standard lamp sockets and *stay on when the power goes off!* They can stay on 4 to 8 hours.

Remember: the overhead fixture inside your front door is connected to the building’s emergency power system and will work even when the power is out. Use the red switch

Keeping your phones on

Get an old-fashioned desk phone which does not need to be plugged in to AC power. For a mobile (cell) phone get a “power bank”, a small rechargeable battery you can plug your phone into. The better ones have enough power to fully charge a mobile phone up to a half dozen times.

Keeping your equipment working

An uninterruptible power supply (UPS) is a battery in a box with enough capacity to run devices plugged into its AC outlets for minutes to hours, depending on the size and what kind of thing is plugged in.

More on power-off bulbs

These bulbs contain a rechargeable battery and an LED lighting element that uses little power. If they're on when the power goes off, they stay on. If they're off when the power goes off, you have to turn them on.

They have a lighting capability similar to that of a 60- or 75-watt incandescent bulb and, depending on the lighting duration, will cost \$6 to \$20 each.

They do need to be charged, so if the bulb is in a lamp that you don't often use, turn it on for a few hours every couple of months.

More on phones

Most simple corded telephones get their power from the phone lines and do not need to be plugged in to an electrical outlet. But if you have a cordless phone that must be plugged in to the wall outlet, it won't work during an outage. This is why we recommend having a simple old-fashioned phone for backup. Several highly rated ones will cost less than \$25.

A rechargeable power bank for a mobile phone can cost from under \$15 for one that will charge one phone a few times to \$50 or more for one that can charge several phones several times.

Just like rechargeable light bulbs, these external batteries won't charge anything if they are not themselves charged up. Do remember to plug them in every month or so.

More on keeping equipment going

As we mentioned, the uninterruptible power supply offers a simple solution for keeping such things as a cordless phone system, a Wi-Fi router, and a computer going during a power outage. It's a "battery in a box" with enough capacity to run devices plugged in via its AC outlets for minutes to hours, depending on your needs and the mix of hardware.

How long does the battery last when the power goes off? That depends on the size of the battery and the power requirements of the equipment. With something that takes only a small amount of power, it might last hours.

Estimating the power needed to keep something on for a long time is an engineering problem that is beyond our present scope. If it looks like power will be off for a while, after ten minutes or so, shut down critical equipment such as desktop computers.

Can you trust a UPS for your medical equipment?

For such things as CPAPs and oxygen generators, sadly, the answer is no. Unless a particular power supply is recommended by a qualified professional or your equipment's manufacturer, do not take the risk of trying to provide continuing power by yourself.

Where can I get the stuff?

Locally, stores such as Hatt's Hardware, Costco, Home Depot, Lowe's, Walmart, and Best Buy come to mind. If you like to buy online, all of these places have an online presence... and of course, there's always Amazon.

Last Words

This is the first version of a Guide for FVB residents that will be periodically updated and distributed by your Health & Safety Committee. You can help make it better by letting us know about things that are missing, things that are unclear and, though we hope not, things that are wrong. Send your comments to the author or to anyone on the Committee.

Dick Wexelblat, Chair, Health & Safety Committee
610 675-5545, dick.wexelblat@gmail.com

Afterthought

Living in a condominium, we don't need to prepare for emergencies quite as urgently as if we were still in individual homes. But in case you're interested, you can find government-recommended guidelines for emergencies at this web site: <https://www.ready.gov/>

You might pass web link along to friends and relatives who are not so lucky as to be here at FVB and *who are* still in individual houses.