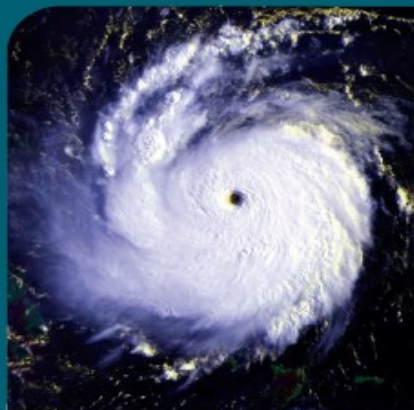


# BE PREPARED TO WEATHER A STORM



**San Bernard  
Electric Co-op**

Your Touchstone Energy  
Cooperative 

## PREPARING FOR A STORM ✓ SAFETY CHECKLIST

- Prepare for extended power outages by stocking up on nonperishable food, medicine, baby supplies and pet food. Have a non-electric can opener on-hand.

- If your water supply is dependent on electricity, purchase bottled water or stock up on water in safe storage containers.

The American Red Cross recommends one gallon of water per person per day.



- Check emergency equipment, such as flashlights, battery-operated radios, extension cords and emergency generators. Buy extra batteries and have a battery powered radio or weather radio to monitor weather and public safety broadcasts.
- Local residents needing community services can call the 2-1-1 Texas helpline of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission for referrals to the appropriate agency by dialing 211 or visiting: [www.211texas.org](http://www.211texas.org)
- Keep extra cash on hand, since an electrical power outage may prevent you from withdrawing money from automatic teller machines or banks.
- Turn your refrigerator to its coldest settings. If the power goes out, this will keep food fresh longer. If you leave the refrigerator closed, most food will stay frozen or fresh for up to 12 hours.
- Turn off and unplug any unnecessary electrical equipment, especially sensitive electronics.
- Keep first aid kits and manuals handy.
- Fill your vehicle's gas tank.
- Place your critical documents, such as birth certificates, insurance documents and special pictures in a waterproof, safe box.
- Take numerous pictures of your residence and belongings. Keep a record of model and serial numbers of belongings.
- Bring loose, lightweight objects, such as lawn furniture, inside. Clear the area around your residence of any debris that may cause damage if becoming airborne in high winds.
- If you plan to lower your TV antenna, do so well before storm winds arrive. Look around to identify power lines and stay clear.



## AFTER A STORM SAFETY CHECKLIST

**Safety is our top priority.** SBEC employees will begin power restoration efforts when and where conditions are safe and secure. Consider returning home only when it is safe and after authorities have advised you to do so. Drive only on roadways and bridges that have been declared passable. Stay tuned to your local radio station for emerging safety information.

- **Stay away from downed power lines. Energized power lines may not be visible among potential debris.**

- Report downed lines immediately to SBEC at (800) 364-3171 or call 911.
- Never clear limbs or trees entangled with power lines.
- If a power line falls on your vehicle while driving, continue to drive away from the line.
- Don't walk in flooded areas or standing water. Remember that wet tree limbs can conduct electricity.



- **Be cautious when entering your home.** Watch for snakes, insects and other animals that may have been driven to higher ground by floodwater.
- **If your home is wet inside, open doors and windows.**  
**Look for electrical system damage once power is restored.**  
If you see sparks, broken or frayed wires, or if the smell of hot insulation is noticeable, turn off the electricity at either the main fuse box or circuit breaker. Call an electrician for advice when necessary.  
Don't step in water to get to the fuse box or circuit breaker.
- **If you smell natural gas or propane, or if you hear a blowing or hissing noise, open a window and leave the area immediately.**  
**Do not operate electrical switches.** If possible, turn the outside main gas valve off and call the gas company from a neighbor's house.
- **Check for sewage and water line damage.** If water supply or sewage pipes are damaged, avoid drinking tap water and using the toilets. Contact the water company or a plumber immediately.
- **Help your neighbor and don't be afraid to ask for help.**  
Tend to the injured and call 911 for help when it's needed.
- **Take pictures of any damage to your house or possessions for insurance claims.**

# GENERATORS SAFETY INFORMATION

If you use portable electric generators, do so in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Never connect a generator directly to a building's wiring without a licensed electrician disconnecting the house wiring from SBEC's service. It can create a safety hazard for SBEC's linemen working to restore power, and it may damage the generator or the house wiring. *For information on proper generator installation and set-up, see the information and diagram below.*

## EMERGENCY GENERATOR SAFETY

When using a generator as a back-up power source in an outage,

**NEVER CONNECT THE GENERATOR DIRECTLY TO YOUR HOME'S WIRING!**

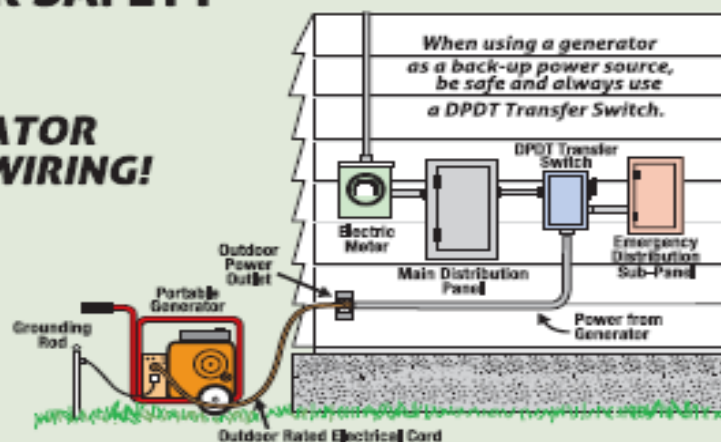
Doing so can create:

- *An overload to your home's wiring system,*
- *Backfeed of electricity from your home onto power lines which can endanger line crews or others, and*
- *Potential fire hazards and other serious damage.*

To safely use a generator to power your home, have a licensed electrician install a **Double-Pole, Double-Throw (DPDT) Transfer Switch**.

- A **DPDT Transfer Switch** is designed to guarantee that utility power will be disconnected before your generator is switched into operation.
- An **Emergency Distribution Sub-Panel** is a separate panel that houses circuits for household electric devices you determine necessary in an emergency.

Finally, be sure your generator is properly sized to accommodate the equipment it needs to run. **Call (800) 364-3171 for more information.**



## FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT STORM SAFETY:

Texas AgriLIFE Extension Service's Extension Disaster Education Network  
[TexasHelp.tamu.edu](http://TexasHelp.tamu.edu)

American Red Cross  
[HoustonRedCross.org](http://HoustonRedCross.org)

National Weather Service  
[www.StormReady.noaa.gov](http://www.StormReady.noaa.gov)  
[www.nhc.noaa.gov/prepare/ready.php](http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/prepare/ready.php)

