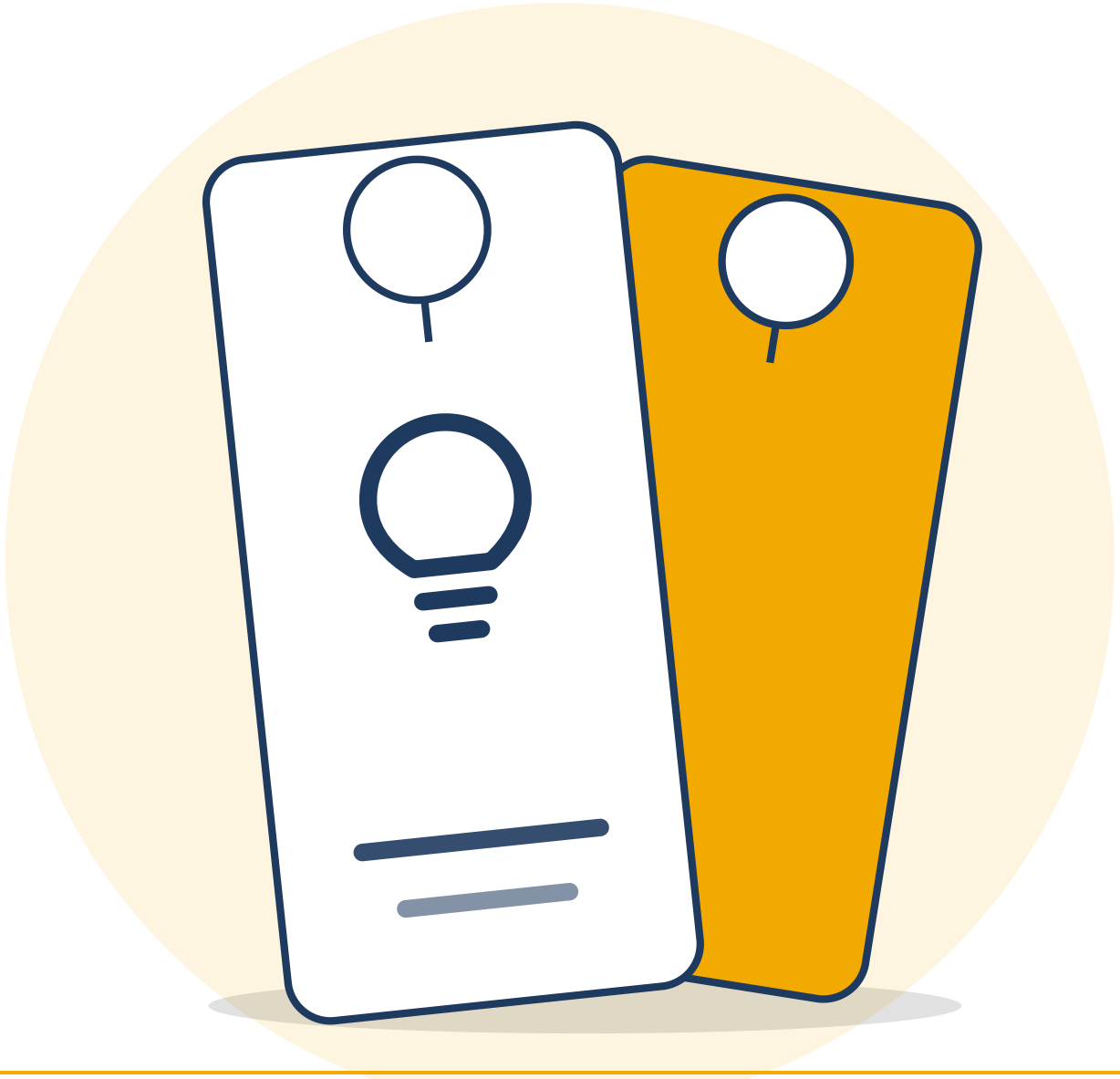
Extra 3

Household Outage Cards

What everyone at home does when the street goes dark



How to Use These Cards

These cards are for the people at home on the night the street goes dark, including the ones who never read the book. Print them on Letter paper with any home printer. Black and white works: every card says what it means in words and pictures, never by color alone.

Fill in the blanks by hand, with a pen: names, phone numbers and the order of your switches. Then hang each card where it is needed.

Card	Where it goes
What Runs on Backup	Fridge door
The Power Just Went Out	Kitchen
Keep the Fridge and Freezer Closed	Fridge door
Generator Rules	The shelf where the generator is kept
Smoke, a Burning Smell or Sparks	Next to the system
How to Shut Our System Off	Next to the system
Hands Off	The battery area
Storm Coming in 48 Hours	Kitchen
Who to Call	Next to the phone
Practice It	Inside a kitchen cabinet door
Winter: Snow and Cold	Garage or mudroom, in a cold climate
Extension Cords Done Right	With the cords, on the power station path
ON BACKUP labels	Beside each outlet and breaker that stays on in an outage

Go through the cards at the table with everyone at home, as section 9.3 of the book describes: who does what when the power goes out, with a name beside each job. The figures for the first card come from your Backup Sizing Calculator plan, or from Worksheets 3 and 4 in Appendix A.

A note on safety. These cards are reminders, not instructions for working on the system. Follow the manuals of your equipment. Any connection to your home's wiring is installed by a licensed electrician or, where local rules let homeowners do their own work, done with a permit and an inspection. In an emergency, call 911.



FRIDGE DOOR

What Runs on Backup

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

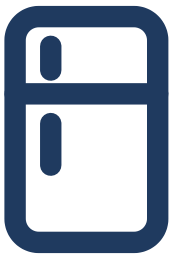
With no sun, a full battery runs this list for about _____ hours.



KITCHEN

The Power Just Went Out

1. Keep the fridge and freezer shut.
2. _____ reads the battery's charge.
3. Power station on cords: plug each appliance into its tagged cord.
4. _____ starts the generator when our plan says, outside only.
5. The manuals are in _____.



FRIDGE DOOR

Keep the Fridge and Freezer Closed

If the power is out and the doors stay shut, food stays safe for about:

4 hours in the fridge.

48 hours in a full freezer.

24 hours in a half-full freezer.

These are the CDC’s food safety limits, not promises.



GENERATOR SHELF

Generator Rules

- Outside only, at least 20 feet from the house, clear of windows, doors and an attached garage.
- Never in the house, the garage, the basement or a shed.
- Never plugged into a wall outlet.
- To the house wiring only through a transfer switch or an interlock kit, installed by a licensed electrician.



NEXT TO THE SYSTEM

Smoke, a Burning Smell or Sparks

Get everyone out of the house.

Call **911** from outside.

Don’t go back in, and don’t touch the system.



NEXT TO THE SYSTEM

How to Shut Our System Off

In the order our manuals give:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

The switches are _____



BATTERY AREA

Hands Off

Only _____ works on this system.

The battery stays live with every switch off, and so do the panels in daylight.



KITCHEN

Storm Coming in 48 Hours

- Battery or power station charged full.
- Freezer full and shut: a full one keeps food safe about 48 hours.
- Generator checked outside: oil and fuel as its manual says.
- Cords set out, each tagged with its appliance.
- Phones charged, and these cards read together.



NEXT TO THE PHONE

Who to Call

- Electrician: _____
- Installer or maker: _____
- Utility outages: _____
- Neighbor: _____

Emergencies: **911**

INSIDE A KITCHEN CABINET DOOR

Practice It

Each year at the December check, and before our storm season:

- Read these cards together.
- Find the switches, the cords and the fridge’s plug.
- Check the names and numbers.



GARAGE OR MUDROOM

Winter: Snow and Cold

- Clear snow from the ground only, with a soft foam rake.
- No metal tools, no hot water. Leave ice for the sun.
- Lithium batteries typically charge only between 32 °F and 113 °F.



WITH THE EXTENSION CORDS

Extension Cords Done Right

- One heavy-duty cord for each appliance, rated for at least what it draws.
- No power strips, no cord into a cord, nothing under rugs.
- A warm plug or cord: unplug it.
- Never into a wall outlet to feed the house.

CUT ALONG THE LINES

ON BACKUP

ON BACKUP

ON BACKUP

ON BACKUP

ON BACKUP

ON BACKUP

ON BACKUP