

SUMMER POWER OUTAGES

We know power outages for any reason, will be especially inconvenient this summer.

Our customers use more electricity in summer than at any other season of the year. And with more people now working from home it's possible that peak demand will be higher than usual.

Just know that, if we've notified you that a power outage is planned, then this work is really important.

But this can change if the weather is forecast to bring extreme heat, lightning or storms.

So plan to have the power you need this summer. There are simple steps you can take to stay safe, be comfortable and manage energy costs, whatever happens.

How we prepare to respond in summer

We monitor the weather closely so our crews are ready for any challenges that might come from forecast conditions.

1. Before storms, high winds or lightning we:
 - Make sure all high priority maintenance is completed
 - Reduce field work leading up to the event if possible, so crews are fresh and able to be called in at all hours
 - Mobilise resources including field crews, network operators, Customer Service Agents and equipment, so we are prepared to respond
2. On days over 35 degrees we:
 - Review all planned work for the affected region and either cancel planned power outages or for urgent works, modify the work to ensure power is back on by midday
 - Prioritise work on faults or urgent repairs essential for reliable electricity
3. On declared Total Fire Ban days we:
 - Move the settings on network safety devices to higher levels of sensitivity to minimise the risk of fires from our assets
 - Have crews available to patrol the length of whole powerlines before power can be safely restored to customers experiencing an outage.
4. In all conditions, if either a planned or unexpected power outage occurs we will:
 - Send a message to life support customers to be ready and activate a contingency plan when power goes out
 - Send a message to all customers via SMS if there is a power outage and including an estimated time of restoration
 - Update our outage map online and current outage lists.

Checklist: Be prepared for power outages

- Look after your health**

Have a contingency plan ready if you rely on life support equipment or need electrical items to care for babies, the disabled, elderly or pets. If you rely on electricity supply for water, make sure you have plenty of supply available.
- Pre-cool your home**

If you have an air-conditioning system, then cool your home or just the rooms you are using to a comfortable temperature if a power outage is planned. Then prevent heat entering by draught-proofing doors and windows and keeping them shut.
- Charge mobile phones, laptop computers and portable backup batteries**

Keep them charged so you can still communicate with friends and family, get updates about when power will be restored or reach emergency services when needed.
- Stay connected using a hotspot**

Your modem won't work without power but you can still access the internet, school or work files via data connection on your mobile phone. Check with your telecommunications provider about data allowances available.
- Keep food safe**

Make sure your refrigerator is set to 5 degrees or below to ensure food stays as fresh as possible. An unopened refrigerator will keep food cold for about four hours. An unopened, full freezer will retain its temperature well enough to preserve food for two days. For more information, visit the Australian Institute of Food Safety:
<https://www.foodsafety.com.au/blog/food-safety-during-power-outages>
- Download some entertainment**

If you can, download your favourite movies or television shows to a portable device so you don't miss out during an outage.
- Back up computer files**

Make sure important computer-based records for your home, study or work are backed up and if necessary, saved on an external hard-drive or storage device before the planned outage begins.
- Have alternative energy available**

If you use alternative energy sources for powering water pumps and equipment or cooking (like diesel generators or BBQs), then make sure they are fuelled and operational. Be safe – outdoor equipment should not be used inside your home. Bear in mind that on Total Fire Ban Days, fire restrictions may be in place.

Have battery powered lamps or torches on hand and make sure you know how to open garage doors and gates manually if they don't have a battery back-up.
- Stay up to date**

Download the [VicEmergency](#) app.
Sign up online for United Energy SMS outage notifications.
Keep emergency phone numbers handy.