

# 15 Tips to Help Your Business Weather a Storm

At Consumers Energy, we want you to be prepared to safely weather any Michigan storm or emergency. These tips will help you and your business so you're not in the dark during a power outage. Learn more at [www.ConsumersEnergy.com/outagecenter](http://www.ConsumersEnergy.com/outagecenter).

## Be Prepared

1. Understand your businesses' priorities following a power outage or disaster and make plans that address immediate (first few hours), near-term (first day or two) and long-term (week or longer) needs and actions.
2. Develop plans to ensure critical business processes can continue during a power outage or emergency.
3. If you have equipment that cannot be disrupted even for short periods, such as a computer or sump pump, install a battery back-up system or generator.
4. When using a generator, make sure it is properly installed by a licensed electrician, for the safety of lineworkers and other emergency responders who may come near power lines. Never use your generator in a basement, breezeway, and attached garage or near any fresh-air intakes, windows or doors to prevent deadly carbon monoxide from entering your home or business.
5. Develop a communications plan for employees, customers and suppliers. Think about how you would serve your customers and coordinate with your employees and suppliers even if your facilities were closed or you cannot get to work.
6. Keep adequate emergency supplies at work, such as battery powered flashlights, radios, extra batteries and first aid kits.
7. Encourage your employees to be prepared at home. Employees who feel their families are unprepared are unlikely to report to work to help the business respond or recover.
8. Visit [www.Ready.Gov](http://www.Ready.Gov) for more information on developing business continuity plans that can help your business be prepared for any disaster.

## During a Storm

9. If you lose power, report it immediately:
  - a. **Web page:** [www.ConsumersEnergy.com/outagecenter](http://www.ConsumersEnergy.com/outagecenter) or [www.ConsumersEnergy.com/outagemap](http://www.ConsumersEnergy.com/outagemap): report outage, get estimated time of restoration (ETR) updates, view outages on outage map.
  - b. **Mobile page:** [www.ConsumersEnergy.com](http://www.ConsumersEnergy.com) from a smartphone: report outage, get ETR updates, view outages on outage map. While your home or business may be out of power, the outage map can also be accessed using a smartphone or tablet or at another location that has power.
  - c. **Calling Consumers Energy** at (800) 477-5050: report outage, get ETR updates.

10. Stay away from down or sagging power lines and any debris that might be entangled with power lines.
  - a. Stay at least 25 feet away from all downed wires and always assume they are “live” and potentially deadly. If you see any downed power lines, Call Consumers Energy at 1-800-477-5050 or your local law enforcement agency immediately.
  - b. Don’t touch anything a power line may be touching; including trees, fences and puddles. A good rule is if you are in a safe location (like your house or car), stay there and make sure you notify Consumers Energy.
  - c. Don’t attempt to remove limbs or other debris from lines.
  - d. Don’t interfere with utility crews while they are working.
  - e. Keep one light “on” so you’ll know when your electricity has been restored.
11. If power is lost, switch electronic devices such as cell phones to a power saving mode and keep all non-essential calls to a minimum to prolong battery life.
12. Don’t travel unless necessary. If you have to leave your business, turn the main breaker off. This will reduce the chance of damage to equipment and safety problems if power is restored while you’re away.

### **After a Storm**

13. After a storm, limit non-essential travel to avoid going into hazardous areas and avoid obstructing restoration efforts.
14. Follow your company’s communication and emergency plans until back to normal operations.
15. Check for damage to the mast that holds the electric service wires to your business, but do not touch any of the equipment and watch for downed wires. Consumers Energy crews will reconnect the wires to your business, but only a licensed electrician can repair or replace a mast or cable.

**Be prepared. *Businesses that recover faster, help the whole community recover faster.***