



## Energy Explorer

### Winter 2026 e-newsletter

### Introduction

If there is one thing that is true in all the Northeast, it is that the weather is highly unpredictable. There might be clear skies one moment, and hazardous storms the next. For kids and unprepared adults, that can often lead to anxiety and panic – but it doesn't have to be that way. By following practical protocols and gathering supplies ahead of time, it becomes possible to weather storms safely.

### What to do before, during and after storms

Whether the forecast includes blizzard conditions, sleet or ice in the winter, or heavy rains, high winds or flood warnings with the arrival of spring, accidents, infrastructure damage and power outages are to be expected.

To minimize the potential risks to life and property, here are some simple steps to take before, during and after a storm.



#### Before

- Charge your cell phone, laptop and other devices.
- Install carbon monoxide detectors. Be sure to test them and replace their batteries regularly.
- Ensure all members of the family are familiar with the smell of natural gas (hint: it smells like rotten eggs) and the signs of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning (more on that below).
- Ensure all chimneys or flues are clean and clear of debris before seasonal use.
- Prepare an emergency kit ([click here](#) for what to include).

#### During

- Turn off and unplug appliances that aren't in use.
- Stay indoors, avoiding windows if possible.
- In the event of power outages, avoid using a gas range, oven or stove as a source of heat. Limit open-flame heating sources to outdoor use only (and only if it is safe to be outdoors).
- Avoid driving if possible, but if you must, avoid driving through areas that are flooded or appear slick, as well as areas near downed wires.
- If you see downed power lines, leave the area immediately and call 911. If lines fall on your car, call 911 and stay inside your car until emergency responders arrive. If you must exit due to fire or other hazards, follow the proper safety practices (see "[If a power line touches your car](#)").

#### After

- Contact 911 and National Grid if you smell natural gas.
- Avoid overloading circuits. Reconnect/turn on appliances one-by-one.
- If you dealt with a power outage for a prolonged period of time, check all food in the refrigerator and freezer for freshness.
- Run the water in all basins, checking carefully for leaks.
- Once it is safe, remove debris and tree limbs from your property, and ensure outdoor meters and vents are free of snow, ice, leaves or build-up.
- DO NOT**, under any circumstances, touch downed power lines, even if they are on your own property.



### Generators: Run electricity without running a risk

There's no question that home generators are a valuable tool to have on hand during a storm. However, they are not without risk. In fact, incidences of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning often spike during outages due to the inappropriate use of generators. To minimize the risks associated with them, they should be maintained and used correctly.

Here's how:

- Before using a generator, be sure that the cords are clean, neatly coiled and free of damage. Inspect for damaged insulation or connectors.
- Start the generator from time to time to ensure it's working but be sure to shut off your main electric breaker beforehand.
- Use generators outdoors **ONLY**, avoiding covered porches, gazebos or carports.
- Place generators away from doors, windows, vents and air intakes to prevent carbon monoxide from coming indoors.
- Refer to the user manual for guidance related to fueling the generator, fuel storage, maintenance and more.

### Carbon monoxide: Poison-free is the way to be!

As noted above, generator usage greatly increases the chance of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. On top of that, prolonged power outages often lead to dangerous practices such as using a gas stove to generate heat or burning charcoal indoors, both of which can create deadly levels of carbon monoxide within the home. While the most obvious solution is to install a CO monitor that will sound in the event of CO exposure, it is equally as important to know the signs of CO poisoning.



But first, let's explain what CO is.

CO is an invisible, odorless and tasteless gas. It is produced when a carbon-containing fuel source (a liquid, natural gas or solid such as coal or wood) is burned, but not to extent of combustion, which happens when there isn't enough oxygen present or when the fuel source is burned too quickly or inefficiently. Not only is CO highly flammable – contact with open flames or ignition sources can lead to explosion – exposure to CO is a major health hazard, so it is imperative that at the [first signs of poisoning](#), you seek fresh air and medical attention.

### But wait, there's more!

We hope that by sharing the information above with students and their families, they will be better able to weather the storms that come their way. For more resources to use in the classroom and out, [visit our website](#) where you can find booklets, games, activity pages and more.

Explore our world of energy education. Visit [ngridenergyworld.com](http://ngridenergyworld.com).

To report emergencies, **call 911** and **National Grid** immediately. Always **call 911** if you suspect a gas leak!

**Smell Gas. Act Fast.**



Know what's below.  
**811** before you dig.

In case of gas emergencies:

Long Island and the Rockaways:  
**911 and 1-800-490-0045**

Metro New York:  
**911 and 1-718-643-4050**

Upstate New York:  
**911 and 1-800-892-2345**

Massachusetts:  
**911 and 1-800-233-5325**

In case of electric emergencies:

Upstate New York:  
**911 and 1-800-867-5222**

Massachusetts:  
**911 and 1-800-465-1212**