



NEWS & INFORMATION

350 Maple Street • Des Moines, Iowa 50319 • 515.281.5979

John Norris, Chairman

Krista Tanner, Board member

Darrell Hanson, Board member

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Contact: Rob Hillesland 515.281.3551

Email: rob.hillesland@iub.state.ia.us

Web site: www.state.ia.us/iub

More safety considerations for winter snow and ice storms, power outages

Advance planning can increase your family's safety at home during winter storms, power outages, and cold weather as has been experienced in portions of Iowa during this winter season.

When a power outage occurs, promptly call your utility to report it. Watch for and avoid contact with downed wires. Use extreme caution whenever burning candles for light as well as firewood or gas stoves/heaters for warmth and don't leave them unattended. If your home has a fireplace or wood-burning stove, ensure adequate venting during use. Take into account that many smaller gas or kerosene heaters are not intended for indoor use because of the ventilation that they require.

People often do not realize, until they need them, that cordless phones require a local source of electricity and will not work during a power outage. Because the small amount of electrical current needed for a traditional wireline (analog) phone to work is carried through the phone line, you should be able to use this type of phone during a localized power outage. If you use only cordless phones, it may be a good idea to keep a corded phone in the closet for just such an emergency. Cellular phones may work during a power outage, but systems for cell phones can become overloaded. Your wireless phone may not work because the cell sites that serve them only have a certain number of hours of battery backup. Also, make sure you have flashlights and battery-operated radios, and an adequate supply of batteries, available for a winter emergency. Weather radios are readily available in Iowa and can help people feel safer at home in the event of a weather emergency.

To help stay warm during an extended power outage, consider moving to a centrally located room without a lot of windows, close off rooms you do not need to use, and dress in many layers of loose clothing, utilizing coats, gloves, and blankets if necessary. You might check with family, friends, or neighbors who live nearby to see if they have heat, and if so, inquire about going there if you can do so safely. Also try to safely check on family, friends, neighbors, or the elderly who may need assistance. Listen to the news to determine if the electricity in your area is likely to be off for an extended time and if local emergency shelters will be open to the public. Depending upon your circumstances, you may consider going to an emergency shelter if you can get there safely.

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