

Restaurant Procedures in the Event of a Power Outage

1. **Check for emergency lights.** When the power goes out, there are often emergency lights that come on to light dark rooms and corridors. Many restaurants also have emergency flashlights on hand. Avoid lighting candles to prevent accidental fires.
2. **Check the circuit breaker.** A power outage may be a result of a tripped switch on the circuit board, so check to see if the problem is something you can fix yourself.
3. **Call the utility company.** If possible, call the utility company to find out how long the power will be out. It helps to keep the appropriate phone number near the circuit board or in another visible place.
4. **Communicate with patrons.** Have servers communicate with patrons by speaking with them at their tables or making an announcement in the restaurant. Usually, waiting just a few minutes is not a problem. When the power goes out, so do the computers and the registers. You may need to give your customers their meals for free, since there will be limited to no access to the Point of Sale (POS) systems.
5. **Keep guests satisfied as much as possible.** Have an action plan for keeping guests satisfied in less than ideal situations. Give guests information updates, and provide them with coupons or other incentives to return once the problem is fixed. Comping meals should be a last resort. Always involve a manager before doing this.
6. **See that guests exit safely.** If the power will be out for more than just a few minutes, patrons will probably want to leave. Usher guests out of the restaurant when you can no longer provide service due to the power failure. If needed, help the guests exit the building safely.
7. **Store all perishables.** Put all perishable food in refrigerators and freezers and try to keep the doors closed as much as possible. Refrigerators will keep food at safe temperatures for about four hours, and freezers will maintain safe temperatures for 24 - 48 hours. Use the back-up thermometers to verify temperatures inside the units.