

*Iowa Utilities Board***NEWS***Elizabeth S. Jacobs, Chair**Nick Wagner, Board Member**Sheila K. Tipton, Board Member***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** May 30, 2014**Contact** | Rob Hillesland, 515.725.7322, rob.hillesland@iub.iowa.gov **Web site** | <http://iub.iowa.gov>

Iowa Utilities Board urges Iowans to be prepared for seasonal storms and potential utility outages

(Des Moines) – Iowa thunderstorms can develop quickly and severe weather may have the potential to produce property damage, injuries, and utility service outages. The Iowa Utilities Board urges all Iowans to create an emergency plan in advance for safety and minimal inconvenience in the event of a sustained power outage or other utility disruptions.

What you can do at your home or business:

- Your emergency safety plan should include a new or restocked First-Aid/Emergency kit readily available in a pre-determined “shelter location” of your home or business, as well as extra water, non-perishable food, and necessary medications to last for several days.
- Install fresh batteries in flashlights or lanterns, and keep a variety of extra batteries available. Have a battery-operated radio and weather radio for storm and emergency related information.
- Due to potential safety risks, it is not recommended to burn candles or lamps for light.
- Have a cell phone fully charged, if available, along with a cell phone car charger.
- If you have analog (non-VoIP) landline telephone service, keep a traditional corded telephone plugged in or have one available; cordless phones require a local source of electricity and will not work during a power outage. Cellular phones may work without electricity, but wireless telephone systems can become overloaded and lose service.

When an electricity outage occurs:

- Promptly call your utility to report the outage as soon as it’s safe to do so and ask if the electricity in your area is likely to be off for an extended period of time. Watch for and avoid contact with all downed utility lines.
- Listen to your local news for potential updates about utility outages, local emergency directives or services that may be available, and, depending upon circumstances, the opening of nearby emergency shelter(s).

(MORE)

- Unless it is a battery-based “fuel-less” model, standby or emergency generators should only be used for short periods of time, and be safely installed outdoors, away from windows and vents to prevent carbon monoxide (CO) fumes from entering the structure. Combustion generators should never be used indoors as the colorless, odorless CO gas can be fatal. Follow all safety precautions for operating any generator.
- Keep your refrigerator door closed to protect food from spoiling.
- If able, check on family, friends, neighbors, or the elderly who may need assistance, especially those with special health or transportation needs and concerns.

If you smell natural gas:

- Leave the premise immediately and notify your utility service provider from a safe location. Do not return until it is safe to do so.

In the case of flooding:

- If water has not reached your basement or ground floor, quickly unplug as many appliances as possible and move them to a higher level.
- Do not touch, attempt to unplug, or disconnect an electrical appliance if the floor is wet or if you are standing in water.
- If floodwaters appear to be rising high enough to cover electrical outlets, switch off the circuit breakers at the main switch in the electrical box before leaving the premises. If your electrical box is located in the basement, make sure there is no standing water before entering.
- If it appears the water level may reach the main electrical box or your electric or natural gas meters, leave the premises and call your utility immediately to have service disconnected.

The Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Department, the Safeguard Iowa Partnership, and the Iowa Emergency Management Association provide valuable information resources for emergency preparedness. Iowa Citizens and businesses can find their preparedness information at www.beready.iowa.gov. Iowans may also check with their local utilities for more information on emergency preparedness.

###

The Iowa Utilities Board regulates utilities to ensure that reasonably priced, reliable, environmentally responsible, and safe utility services are available to all Iowans.

Follow the Board on Twitter: https://twitter.com/iub_now