**How to Survive the First 7 Days of a Blackout**  *by* [**Eric Beuning**](https://www.askaprepper.com/author/eric-beuning/)

The following 7-day blackout scenario is loosely based on a real experience of a prolonged power outage. It happened at a time when supply chain issues and labor shortages made it hard for utility companies to restore the electrical grid.

The following journal entries and in-depth insights are meant to help you prepare and refine your strategy should you need to survive a 7-day blackout in your own life.

**Day 1 of Blackout**

The news report says the ice storm knocked out the eastern third of the city’s power grid, and it might take several days to fully restore power. Living at the end of the road by the wilderness park, I’m guessing we’ll be one of the last to get power back.

I don’t know how long we’ll have water pressure being at the end of the line. So, I filled the bathtub and every jug I’ve got. There should be enough water to manually flush the toilet and wash up for a few days.

A bunch of people ran out panic-buying. I stayed home and kept working on the house. I hope that doesn’t come back to bite me. The water pressure seemed to die in the late afternoon when all the neighbors got back from the stores.

I tried launching my phone as a hotspot and tethered it to my laptop, but there was no signal. I think the blackout is affecting the cell towers.

I pulled the flashlights and power station out of the camping gear. It’s still got 77% of the charge left. Thank God, I recharged it after our last trip!

**Notes:**

The lithium-ion batteries will lose 3 to 5% of charge per month.

These batteries can be damaged if depleted of charge.

So, it’s always wise to fully charge your power station after every camping trip.

If you have municipal water, there’s no telling how long water pressure will last. Keeping a dozen big water jugs on hand or filling the bathtub immediately ensures you have water for washing, drinking, and flushing the toilet.

**Day 2 of Blackout**

The refrigerator didn’t stay cold as long as I hoped. I moved what I could to the chest freezer, then we had a big cookout last night. Tried to keep the thawed meat from going to waste. Used the charcoal grill to save propane.

It got colder in the house than I expected. So, I moved everyone into the downstairs family room where we could all sleep in one room at the same time.

We tried the ceramic pot candle heater thing you see on the internet, but it didn’t do much. Hooked up the sunflower heater I use when ice fishing and it kept the living room warm enough.

I used the power station to run some lights and a fan for white noise last night. It was down to 48% this morning. I figured out how to connect it to the 100-watt solar panel but it’s only trickle charging.

**Notes**

A refrigerator will only stay cold for 4 to 6 hours at best. A freezer might keep food cold for 24 to 36 hours. A strategically packed chest freezer can keep foods cold for up to 72 hours.

A 300-watt-hour (WH) power station can’t run big appliances for long. They’re meant more for running small lights and fans.

When using a propane heater indoors, make sure to place a CO detector nearby. Only use the heater in the coldest parts of the night.

**Day 3 of Blackout**

Figured out how to make coffee by boiling water on the old charcoal grill. Then I slowly poured it over the grounds in the coffee maker. Nice to get a little taste of my usual morning routine again and my headache finally went away!

The kids are getting cranky. I think the idea of camping at home isn’t fun for them anymore. They’ve been out of their comfort zone for too long. Rigging up the camping shower kit in the upstairs bathroom. I simmer water on the grill to give everyone a short shower.

I think I’ll hook the power station up to my old laptop so we can all watch a movie tonight.

**Notes**

Morale can start to suffer after 3 days in a blackout. Recreating little creature comforts helps maintain a positive mindset. You can improvise a camping shower at home with a cheap solar shower to get everyone clean.

Playing a favorite family board game, or just sitting outside promotes family togetherness. It’s especially helpful for kids.

**Day 4 of Blackout**

The dog woke us up barking at something or someone in the middle of the night. I looked but didn’t see anything.

The news report said the utility company hopes to have power restored in a day or two.

It took around two hours to get it to 100%. We just need to be smart about how we use it going forward.

**Notes**

Looks like the neighbor got his hands on a big generator and is running in his garage. I traded him some toilet paper and a big, thawed ham to have him recharge the power station.

By day 4 you and/or your neighbors are bound to run out of something.

It’s also the time when all the frozen food is thawed. It’s a great time to trade.

It can also be the point when unprepared and unsavory individuals look for looting opportunities.

Strengthening good relationships with your neighbors has definite security benefits as well.

**Day 5 of Blackout**

Getting the garage door open was a nightmare, but I needed the SUV to go look for supplies.

The stores were all out of big exchange tanks and U-Haul was out of propane. I found a four-pack of 1-pound propane cylinders at a truck stop. I think it will be enough to get us through the coldest part of the night.

I also found a 150-watt inverter that plugs into the SUV. Now we can recharge my laptop and all the other devices without having to use the power station! Why didn’t I think of this sooner?

**Notes**

Propane supplies dwindle fast in a prolonged blackout. Truck stops are a great place for convenience supplies that you might use for car camping. They’re not a place the average person thinks of going for things like propane and electric adapters. So, they’re worth checking out after the big box store’s shelves are bare.

One-pound gas cylinders might be easier to find and hold around 21,000 BTUs. This is enough to run a Sunflower heater for roughly 4 hours.

**Day 6 of Blackout**

The rainstorm last night filled the rain barrels for the garden to the brim. It’s not drinkable but lets us flush the toilet and shower.

We grilled up the salvageable from the freezer. The dog gets to eat the rest.

The internet came back for a few hours in the middle of the day but went down again with no signal.

We made tuna mac and cheese on the grill, and a three-bean salad using canned beans that turned out great.

Charging my laptop from the SUV has been a real godsend. Reduces the drain on the power station and lets us have a family movie night.

**Notes**

Time and a positive mindset will help you adapt easily to any survival situation.

You start to find new ways to make the most out of resources you previously took for granted.

By day 6 of a power blackout fresh meat and dairy are completely gone or spoiled. Canned meats like tuna and SPAM are good options protein options.

**Day 7 of Blackout**

The lights and everything blinked on for a few seconds this morning. The whole house started beeping and dinging but went black again.

Some of the circuit breakers in the panel were flipped. I don’t know if they were always like that.

I reset all the circuit breakers and turned off everything. Unplugged the refrigerator and the TV and left just the bathroom light on.

The power finally came back on at 5:30 and stayed on. None of the circuit breakers tripped. I think we’re finally out of the darkness, but the stores are still pretty much empty.

**Notes**

Power surges are common after a 7-day blackout there are often power surges. The grid can flicker and fail again when so many devices suddenly come back on again.

Ideally, you should unplug sensitive electronics like TVs, desktop computers, and refrigerators at the start of a blackout to prevent surge damage.

Even once power is restored, be prepared for it to take several days to weeks before the shelves of local stores are restocked.

Surviving the first 7 days of a blackout starts with using your resources wisely. Maintaining a positive, growth mindset is also crucial. Reinventing creature comforts and maintaining social connections within your family and neighbors also boost morale.

Your resources are going to change over time. Perishable foods have a finite lifespan. You’ll need to eat them in the first few days or trade them to the neighbors for other important supplies.

If you need to resupply, mom-and-pop hardware stores and truck stops are more likely to have supplies in reserve after big box stores are picked clean.

When the 7-day blackout finally ends, there are likely to be power surges. Unplugging sensitive appliances like refrigerators, and TVs can protect them from surge damage.