

POWER OUTAGE BUSINESS CONTINUITY TOOLKIT



Presented By :

North Durham Chamber of Commerce
Emergency Preparedness Committee



**NORTH DURHAM
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**



INTRODUCTION

This toolkit was developed in response to the lessons learned from the May 2022 Ontario derecho, a rare and destructive storm that swept across southern Ontario with hurricane-force winds. In Uxbridge, an EF2 tornado embedded within the storm's leading edge caused catastrophic damage, tearing roofs from buildings, toppling trees, and knocking out power for days. Nearby, Scugog experienced similar destruction, with blocked roads, downed power lines, and prolonged outages affecting homes, farms, and businesses.

The path of destruction spanned over 1,200 km, causing insured losses approaching \$1 billion. Across the region, more than one million customers lost electricity, and municipalities declared states of emergency as infrastructure and communications failed.

The event exposed how quickly a severe weather system can overwhelm local capacity and disrupt every aspect of community and business life. It underscored the critical importance of preparedness, coordination, and mitigation planning—before disaster strikes.

The North Durham Chamber of Commerce developed this toolkit to help businesses across Uxbridge, Scugog, and Brock prepare for future power outages and extreme weather events. By providing practical tools, checklists, and guidance, the Chamber aims to strengthen local resilience, support business continuity, and ensure that our communities can recover quickly even in the face of future disruptions.

ARE YOU READY FOR THE UNEXPECTED?

Try this Quick Self-Assessment:

It's early May, a severe weather event strikes your community and the utility provider that supplies power to your organization. A quick assessment by the utility provider indicates that power will not be restored within the next few hours. A further assessment will be needed to determine exactly when power will be restored.

Due to the size of the power utility grid in your community, it has been determined it will be three days before electricity is fully restored. You should assume you will not be able to access anything in your facilities that requires power for at least three days. Based on this scenario, complete the eight questions on the following page to identify your risk.



1. IDENTIFY YOUR RISK: A QUICK SELF-ASSESSMENT

Based on the planning scenario, complete the eight questions below to highlight areas that your Business Continuity Plan should address:

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| <p>1</p> <p>If the power outage affects the phone, internet, or cable, can your organization operate without any of them?</p> | <p>2</p> <p>Can you deliver your product during the power outage?</p> | <p>3</p> <p>Can your employees work in the business without the following electrically supported systems: heating, venting, and air conditioning (HVAC), water heating/ distribution, elevators, or lighting?</p> | <p>4</p> <p>Is your inventory and facility safe from water or temperature damage if environment control systems fail without electricity?</p> | <p>5</p> <p>Can you access your facility without electricity, and will safety alarm systems operate?</p> |
| YES <input type="checkbox"/> | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | YES <input type="checkbox"/> |
| NO <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |

For each question, 1-5, that you answered 'No', address the specific issue in your Business Continuity Plan.

Use the Power Outage Toolkit resources to help determine the preparedness and mitigation activities associated with protecting your equipment and continuing operations during a power outage.

2. DEVELOP A PLAN

Based on the information in the completed Quick Self-Assessment, create a Preparedness and Mitigation Project Plan for the following elements:

STAFF

SPACE

SYSTEMS

SERVICE

By breaking your preparedness into smaller portions, you can identify preparedness gaps and mitigation actions which will ensure your safety and business continuity.

Review the Quick Reference Guide on Page 11 to determine which preparedness and mitigation actions to take based on the potential impacts to your organization.



Power Outage Community Planning Table

| QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS | INSIGHTS | FILL IN ANSWERS HERE |
|--|--|-----------------------------------|
| Should I report a power outage to the utility provider? | While a severe storm or event with widespread power interruption should be recognized on the utility provider's monitoring system, it is always advisable to report outages. | OPG Outage Hotline 1-800-434-1235 |
| What is my organization's location on the grid and in the restoration queue? | Understanding your location on the power grid helps anticipate when service may be restored. During an outage, monitor conditions and promptly report changes to the utility provider. Never attempt electrical repairs or move tree limbs from lines - downed lines can remain energized even when they appear inactive, and crews must be given safe access to restore power. | |
| Where does my organization fit in the process? | Monitor the outage and report any changes immediately. However, never try to make your own electrical repairs or pull tree limbs off power lines, and stay clear of areas where repairs are being done. | |
| What are your recommendations for my organization to prepare for a power outage? | <p>Each organization will have specific power usage needs; however, all organizations can do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect data with backup files • Consider backup power for any critical systems • Make plans for supplies and services for employees • Provide employees with power outage safety information and protocols • Contact customers and suppliers • Review insurance coverage | |



Below is a list of key preparedness measures your organization can complete to help get your staff prepared for a power outage event; however, the list is not all-inclusive. For additional guidance on preparedness measures, please see the Quick Reference Guide on Page 11.

| Develop A Plan: STAFF | | | |
|---|---------------------|---------------|------------------------|
| POTENTIAL PREPAREDNESS ACTION | ASSIGNED TO: | BUDGET | COMPLETION DATE |
| Develop Business Continuity and Crisis Communications Plans | | | |
| Implement an Employee Awareness and Training | | | |
| Conduct an Employee Training Session | | | |
| Conduct tabletop exercise | | | |
| Review Insurance Coverage/create inventory | | | |
| SUGGESTED ACTION: Develop an Emergency Go Kit | | | |



The following nonstructural mitigation actions can be completed using common tools and readily available materials. This list is not exhaustive. For more information on addressing nonstructural risks, please refer to the Quick Reference Guide on Page 11.

Develop A Plan: SPACE

| SPACE RISKS | MITIGATION/SOLUTION |
|----------------------|--|
| Offices | Install surge protectors to all important equipment. |
| Stairwells/Hallways | Install emergency lighting, directional signage, and exit signs. Ensure proper maintenance is performed on all existing signage. |
| Conference Rooms | Install surge protectors to all important equipment. |
| Break Areas/Kitchens | Develop a plan for turning off and disconnecting appliances during an outage. |
| Escalators/Elevators | Ensure occupants understand emergency evacuation plans, and establish alternative methods to move people and inventory. |
| Other/Notes | |

The following systems may be affected during a power outage. This list is not exhaustive. For mitigation solutions, consult the Quick Reference Guide on Page 11 or develop site-specific measures in coordination with your utility provider.



Develop A Plan: SYSTEMS

COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS RISKS

| Item | MITIGATION/SOLUTION |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Phone | Install at least one landline telephone. |
| Internet Services | Develop a plan for server or internet access with backup power outside of the affected area. |
| Cable & other Television services | Develop a secondary means of information gathering. |

PRODUCT DELIVERY SYSTEMS RISKS

| Item | MITIGATION/SOLUTION |
|--------------------|--|
| Transport Vehicles | Ensure you have backup power for fuel pumps and keep fuel tanks full for all vehicles. |

BUILDING SUPPORT SYSTEMS RISKS

| Item | MITIGATION/SOLUTION |
|----------------------------|---|
| HVAC | Develop alternative work procedures as required. |
| Water Heating/Distribution | Store drinking water as needed. Protect plumbing lines during freezing temperatures. |
| Equipment Elevators/Lifts | Develop a plan for using an alternative elevator with backup power for product or material transportation only. |
| Generators and Fuel | Develop a generator maintenance, operation, and fueling plan. |
| Lighting | Ensure emergency lighting works. Use portable lighting as needed for evacuation. |
| Sump Pumps | Ensure the pump has a battery, generator or other backup power source is installed. |



Develop A Plan: SYSTEMS CONT.

SECURITY/SAFETY SYSTEMS RISKS

| Item | Mitigation/Solution |
|----------------------------|--|
| Badging/Access | Ensure personnel are aware of entering and exiting requirements during a power outage. |
| Smoke and other Alarms | Ensure alarms have backup power. |
| Video Surveillance Systems | Ensure alternative plan is in place for surveillance. |
| Interactive PA Systems | Develop an alternative plan for making announcements during an emergency. |

FINANCIAL SYSTEMS RISKS A

| Item | Mitigation/Solution |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| General | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure paperless record keeping for financial and tax records • Document valuables and business equipment |
| Payroll - Processed on site | Develop an emergency plan for processing payroll off-site (consider a contingency agreement with a payroll processing company). |
| Payroll - Processed by Payroll Vendor | Request disclosure of your payroll company's disaster plan |

FINANCIAL SYSTEMS RISKS B

| Item | Mitigation/Solution |
|------------------------------|--|
| Invoice, Payments & Receipts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a backup plan is in place for receiving and paying invoices through an off-site facility or vendor and issuing receipts. • Identify a web-based, mobile application, or other method for handling orders, making and receiving payments, and issuing receipts. |



Develop A Plan: SYSTEMS CONT.

PRODUCTION SYSTEMS RISKS (list the systems that are part of your production environment, see examples on next page)

| Item | Mitigation/Solution | Assigned to | Budget | Completion Date |
|------|---------------------|-------------|--------|-----------------|
| 1 | | | | |
| 2 | | | | |
| 3 | | | | |
| 4 | | | | |
| 5 | | | | |

The most important things to remember during a power outage to prevent losses is to maintain revenue-generating activities and protect the building, equipment, and inventory from damage.

RESTAURANT

Examples of high-priority production systems in a restaurant environment may include:

- Refrigerators and Freezers
- Ovens, Grills, and Deep Fryers
- Ice makers and ink Dispensers

OFFICE ENVIRONMENT

Examples of high-priority production systems in an office environment may include:

- Computers, Printers, and Copiers
- Network or Server Access lighting

FACTORY

Examples of high-priority production systems in a factory environment may include:

- Machinery and conveyor Belts
- Safety Systems
- Order Processing and Receiving



Develop A Plan: PROVIDE COMMUNITY SERVICE

| RELIEF KITS | CHARGING STATION | FOOD PREPARATION | VOLUNTEER |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p>If your organization is open after the disaster, you could become a distributor or storage warehouse for Disaster Relief Kits. Providing a place for the supplies to be stored locally allows volunteer organizations to readily distribute them throughout affected areas.</p> | <p>Does your organization have electricity after the disaster? If so, you may want to become a volunteer charging station. Provide a safe, secure place for emergency responders, volunteers, and community members to charge their cell phones, power wheelchairs, and battery-powered tools.</p> | <p>Does your organization have the capability to prepare or serve meals? Providing a sanitary kitchen for emergency responders, volunteers, or community members to prepare or receive meals following a disaster is essential for rebuilding the community.</p> | <p>Not sure how your organization can directly contribute after the disaster? Volunteer. Talk with your neighbours and determine where volunteer opportunities exist in the community. You could prepare meals, sort debris, or even work at a local office of a volunteer organization.</p> |

Determine how your organization can support the community after a power outage. Build partnerships with local groups and integrate a SERVICE component into your Business Continuity Plan.

Know your neighbours and coordinate support before an emergency happens.



Develop Business Continuity and Crisis Communications Plans

| PREPAREDNESS ACTION | PREPAREDNESS SOLUTIONS |
|--|--|
| <p>STEP ONE: Develop Continuity and Crisis Communications Plan</p> | <p>Create a Business Continuity Plan that includes strategies for storing critical business documents and data. Resource: https://chamber.ca/resources/business-continuity-planning/</p> |
| | <p>Assign a Business Continuity Team Leader responsible for implementing the Business Continuity Plan to bring your organization back to business after an event.</p> |
| | <p>Create a Crisis Communications Plan that includes internal and external communication protocols for before, during, and after a disaster. Resource: https://chamber.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Crisis-Communications-Planning-Guide.pdf</p> |
| | <p>Include the social media channels of your power company in the Crisis Communications Plan to ensure timely updates of power outages.</p> |





2. QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE: STAFF

| Develop Business Continuity and Crisis Comm. Plans Cont. | |
|---|---|
| PREPAREDNESS ACTION | PREPAREDNESS SOLUTIONS |
| STEP 2: Conduct an Employee Awareness Campaign | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Run an employee awareness campaign on safe response before, during, and after outages. Cover communication plans, policies, and evacuation procedures. Provide guidance on post-outage critical actions. Train staff on equipment shutdown, safe entry/exit, and data backup. Prepare emergency plans for staff with medical equipment needs. |
| STEP 3: Develop an Employee Training Program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a power outage training program with employee engagement activities. Incorporate drills or exercises and align with existing campaigns (e.g., National Preparedness Month). Train staff on how to access information during outages. Review evacuation routes, shelter plans, and equipment shutdown procedures. Include individual and family preparedness guidance. |
| STEP 4: Conduct an Employee Training Session | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold a preparedness discussion with staff. Share awareness campaign key messages. Educate employees on continuity and communication procedures. Provide basic first aid and CPR training. |
| STEP 5: Conduct a Power Outage Drill | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a disaster tabletop exercise with staff. Contact your local emergency manager beforehand for input and participation opportunities. |
| STEP 6: Review Insurance Coverage/ Create Inventory | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet annually with your insurance agent to review coverage, deductibles, and limits. Maintain a photo or video inventory of property, equipment, and supplies. Obtain utility service interruption insurance if not already covered. |
| SUGGESTED ACTION: Develop an Emergency Supply Kit | Develop an emergency kit with supplies you may need before, during, and/or after the disaster. |



2. QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE: SYSTEMS

Power outages can disrupt critical systems. Protect your operations by installing a backup generator or maintaining access to a portable unit when feasible. Prioritize essential business systems and plan accordingly—full backup power may not be practical, but short-term support for critical systems is achievable. Always consult a qualified professional before installation. Your utility provider may offer on-site evaluations, or you can schedule an independent inspection to optimize generator use during an outage. Use the Power & Generator Checklist from Agility Recovery to guide your preparations, and refer to the tables below for generator and fuel-specific tips.

| Develop Business Continuity and Crisis Comm. Plans Cont. | |
|---|--|
| BUILDING SUPPORT SYSTEMS RISKS | MITIGATION SOLUTION |
| Generators and Fuel | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide whether to buy or lease a generator. • Protect, maintain, and test generators regularly. • Secure reliable fuel supply from multiple vendors. • Store fuel safely in a weather-proof location. |
| Lighting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep emergency lighting in working order. • Assign staff to manage flashlights. • Prohibit candles—use only safe lighting. • Provide employees with backup battery-powered flashlights. |
| Sump Pumps | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install a battery, generator, or backup power source for sump pumps. • Protect basements by ensuring sump pumps remain functional during storms. |
| SECURITY/SAFETY SYSTEMS RISKS | MITIGATION SOLUTION |
| Badging/Access | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install battery backup for RFID access systems. • Maintain keyed access to at least one entry point. • Ensure a key is always available on-site or off-site in a safe location. • Train staff on access policies and procedures during outages. |
| Smoke and Other Alarms | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide backup power for smoke alarms and security systems. |



IT'S TIME TO TAKE ACTION!

Examples of high-priority production systems in a restaurant environment may include:

- Refrigerators and Freezers
- Ovens, Grills, and Deep Fryers Ice makers and Ink Dispensers



3. TAKE ACTION: STAFF CHECKLIST

Use the following checklists to document actions taken to prepare your staff and organization for power outage events.

| STAFF CHECKLIST | | |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| PREPAREDNESS ACTIONS | DATE TO BE ACCOMPLISHED | INITIAL OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON |
| Developed Business Continuity and Crisis Communications Plans | | |
| Implemented employee awareness and training through campaigns, programs, and sessions. | | |
| Conducted a Table Top Outage Drill | | |
| SUGGESTED ACTION: Developed an Emergency Supply Kit | Yes _____ No _____ Not Applicable _____ | |



| STAFF CHECKLIST CONT. | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|
| SPACE RISKS | MITIGATION SOLUTION | ACCOMPLISHED | DATE/INITIAL OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON |
| Offices | Installed surge protectors to all important equipment. | <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Not Applicable | |
| Hallways/Stairwells | Installed emergency lighting, directional signage, and exit signs. Ensured proper maintenance is performed on all existing signage. | <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Not Applicable | |
| Conference Rooms | Installed surge protectors to all important equipment. | <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Not Applicable | |
| Break Areas/Kitchens | Developed a plan for turning off and disconnecting appliances during an outage. | <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Not Applicable | |
| SYSTEMS RISKS | MITIGATION SOLUTION | ACCOMPLISHED | DATE/INITIAL OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON |
| Phone | Installed at least one landline telephone. | <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Not Applicable | |
| Internet/Servers | Internet/Servers Developed a plan for server or internet access with backup power outside of the affected area. | <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Not Applicable | |
| Cable & Other Television Services | Developed a secondary means of information gathering. | <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Not Applicable | |
| Conferencing & Audiovisual Equip. | Installed surge protectors to all important equip. | <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Not Applicable | |



| STAFF CHECKLIST CONT. | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| PRODUCT DELIVERY SYSTEMS RISKS | MITIGATION SOLUTION | ACCOMPLISHED | DATE/INITIAL OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON |
| Transport Vehicles | Ensured backup power for fuel pumps, and fuel tanks for all vehicles remain full. | <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Not Applicable | |
| BUILDING SUPPORT SYSTEMS RISKS | MITIGATION SOLUTION | ACCOMPLISHED | DATE/INITIAL OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON |
| HVAC | Installed surge protectors to all important equipment. | <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Not Applicable | |
| Water Heating/Distribution | Stored drinking water as needed. Developed a plan for protecting pipes during freezing temperatures. | <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Not Applicable | |
| Generators and Fuel | Developed a generator maintenance, operation, and fueling plan. | <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Not Applicable | |
| Lighting | Ensured emergency lighting works, and portable lighting will be used as needed for evacuation. | <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Not Applicable | |
| Sump Pump | Ensured the pump has a battery, generator, or other backup power source installed. | <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Not Applicable | |



STAFF CHECKLIST CONT.

| STAFF CHECKLIST CONT. | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| SECURITY/SAFETY SYSTEMS RISKS | MITIGATION SOLUTION | ACCOMPLISHED | DATE/INITIAL OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON |
| Badging/Access | Ensured personnel are aware of access and exiting requirements during a power outage. | <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Not Applicable | |
| Smoke and other Alarms | Ensured alarms have power backup. | <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Not Applicable | |
| Video Surveillance Systems | Ensured alternative plan is in place for surveillance. | <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Not Applicable | |
| TRANSIT SYSTEMS RISKS | MITIGATION SOLUTION | ACCOMPLISHED | DATE/INITIAL OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON |
| Transportation | Developed alternative transportation and work plans, including shelter-in-place procedures, to ensure continuity for employees, customers, and suppliers during outages. | <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Not Applicable | |
| FINANCIAL SYSTEMS RISKS | MITIGATION SOLUTION | ACCOMPLISHED | DATE/INITIAL OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON |
| General | Ensured paperless recordkeeping for financial and tax records and documented valuables and business equipment. | <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Not Applicable | |
| Payroll - Processed on site | Developed an emergency plan for processing payroll off-site (consider a contingency agreement with a payroll processing company). | <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Not Applicable | |
| Payroll - Processed by Payroll Vendor | Requested disclosure of your payroll vendor's disaster plan. | <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Not Applicable | |
| Invoice, Payment, Receipts | Developed backup plan for receiving and paying invoices and issuing receipts. | <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Not Applicable | |



| STAFF CHECKLIST CONT. | | | |
|--|---|---|------------------------------------|
| PRODUCTION SYSTEMS RISKS. (List the systems that are part of your production environment) | MITIGATION SOLUTION | ACCOMPLISHED | DATE/INITIAL OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON |
| 1 | | | |
| 2 | | | |
| 3 | | | |
| 4 | | | |
| 5 | | | |
| SERVICE ACTION | SERVICE SOLUTION | ACCOMPLISHED | DATE/INITIAL OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON |
| Identified Ways to Engage and Participate in your Community | These activities are written into your Business Continuity Plan. | | |
| Invoice, Payment, Receipts | Developed backup plan for receiving and paying invoices and issuing receipts. | <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Not Applicable | |

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