

# Giving you a helping hand...

Information guide for our Priority Service customers



[www.northernpowergrid.com/priority](http://www.northernpowergrid.com/priority)



# About Northern Powergrid

Northern Powergrid provides power to around 8 million customers across 3.9 million homes and businesses in the North East, Yorkshire and northern Lincolnshire. Our job is to deliver electricity safely to your home through our electricity distribution network.

Please contact your supplier if you have a question about your bill, your meter or their Priority Service. You can find their contact details on your latest electricity bill. If you're not sure who your electricity supplier is, use our 'Who is my electricity Supplier?' service at [www.northernpowergrid.com/supplier](http://www.northernpowergrid.com/supplier)



# Welcome to our Priority Services Register

At Northern Powergrid, we are always striving to provide the very best service to all our customers – we are satisfied only when you are.

We understand that, during a power cut, some customers may need additional support. That's why we developed our Priority Services Register.

You've been sent this Welcome Pack because you have recently registered for our Priority Services. Alternatively, a friend or family member may have registered on your behalf, or you could have been automatically registered through your electricity provider.

Whatever the reason, you now have the reassurance that, in the event of a power cut, you are our priority.

# What is the Priority Services Register?

Our Priority Services Register is for those people who may need a little extra support when there's a power cut. This could be for many reasons, for example if you have a medical condition, if you're elderly or disabled, if you have young children, or if you rely on electricity for medical equipment.

Being on our Priority Services Register provides a whole range of benefits. Depending on the circumstances, we will:

- Let you know in advance if we are going to turn off your power to carry out planned work.
- Keep you updated by text or telephone during the power cut.
- Let you know what time your electricity supply is likely to be back on whenever possible.

- Provide a 'knock and wait' service – giving those who need it, more time to answer the door.

We might also be able to:

- Provide help by sending our Customer Support Vehicle to a site close to your home so that you can get hot drinks and snacks.
- Provide a 'winter warmer' pack, which could include a torch, blanket, hat and gloves, socks and an analogue phone
- Organise alternative accommodation if needed.

We also work closely with the British Red Cross and, if necessary, we can arrange for them to get in touch or visit your home to offer a bit more emotional and practical support.

# Visiting your home

There may be times during a power cut when we will send someone to visit your home. This will either be one of our employees or one of our contractors.

We understand you want to know exactly who you're letting into your home. We follow a code of conduct so you can be sure that all visits are made by genuine staff or contractors.

- All our employees and contractors will show an identity card displaying the name of their company, their own name, reference number and their colour photograph.
- All our employees and contractors will be able to explain what they are there to do.

- Where possible, all vehicles used for visits to customers' homes will carry our own (or our contractors) logo.
- All our employees and contractors will be able to tell you our emergency phone number as well as the number to call if you have a general enquiry.

If you are blind, have poor sight or would just like to feel more secure, we also agree a password with you for us to use when we make an appointment. Just give us a call if you would like to do this on

**0800 169 2996.**



## Power cut? Here's what you should do...

- ✔ First things first, if safe to do so, check to see if your neighbours have lost their supply and if the street lights have gone out. If they haven't, the problem could be with your own electricity supply.
- ✔ Do you have a pre-payment meter? Does it need credit?
- ✔ If you have a trip switch, if safe to do so, check to see if it has cut off the power. If it has, switch off all your appliances and try and reset the trip.
- ✔ Check any letters or emails we have sent you – are these about a planned power cut? If so, they will also let you know the anticipated duration of any planned interruptions to your electricity supply. If you have access to the internet, you can also find out more at [www.northernpowergrid.com/serviceinterruptions](http://www.northernpowergrid.com/serviceinterruptions)
- ✔ Switch off all electrical appliances for safety reasons but leave one light switched on so you know when the power comes back on.
- ✔ Give us a call on **0800 169 2996**.



# General information



## Mobility aids

**If you need electricity to help you move around your home you may find it difficult if there's a power cut. Here are some ideas you may find helpful.**

### Stairlifts

If your stairlift is mains operated it will stop where it is during a power cut. See if there is a manual release handle to return the lift safely to ground level if it stops midway between floors.

Some stairlifts have battery back up. This automatically takes over and keeps the stairlift working if there is a power cut. Often these stairlifts use rechargeable batteries so do recharge them regularly.

### Bath hoists

A fully-sealed rechargeable battery pack powers modern bath hoists. Charging the battery from the mains must take place outside the bathroom.

When fully charged, most bath hoist batteries will lift someone weighing 100kg up to ten times.

Please check with the manufacturer for more information.

# Heating and lighting systems

**Many central heating systems and water boilers use electricity to power pumps and controls or to provide the main source of heat. These systems won't work during a power cut. Some also have electronic timers that may need to be reset when the electricity is restored.**

- Remember that some gas ovens and hobs also won't work without electricity. If you know there is going to be a power cut, you may like to prepare a warm meal in advance or fill a flask with a warm drink to last while the electricity is off.
- Portable heaters are a good alternative source of heat during a power cut. Please take care where you put these and never leave children alone with them. Don't forget to switch them off when your power comes back on.
- In cold weather, keep blankets and warm clothing to hand in case your electricity goes off unexpectedly.
- If you can heat water in a way that doesn't require electricity, fill a hot water bottle and use it to keep warm.

## Lighting

- Keep a torch with a healthy battery somewhere easily accessible. It will help you find your way around if your electricity is interrupted at night.
- Although candles and gas lamps are a good alternative source of light they can be dangerous. Be sure to keep them a safe distance from children, curtains and furniture. Don't forget to put them out when the power is restored.

# Freezers

**In most cases, freezer contents will not be affected by a power cut. Food will normally stay frozen for up to 12 hours in an upright freezer and up to 24 hours in a chest freezer, but check the manufacturer's handbook for more information.**

**To preserve freezer contents as long as possible make sure you...**

- Keep the freezer door closed. If you know your power is going to go off take anything you need out of the freezer before the electricity is switched off. Don't put fresh unfrozen food into the freezer until power is restored.
- Fill any empty space inside the freezer. Small cardboard boxes packed with newspaper are ideal for this. You could also cover the freezer with a blanket, helping to keep it cold.
- If the freezer has a fast freeze mode, turn it on about an hour before a planned power cut.

# Household appliances

## Labour saving devices

If left on, some dishwashers and washing machines will automatically resume their cycles when the power is restored after an interruption. However, appliances with electronic timers and controls won't and will need to be reset. If you know your electricity is going to be switched off, try to avoid starting such appliances beforehand.

## Home entertainment

Many DVD players, media and other equipment have electronic clocks or timers. Check to see if yours have battery back up. If not, you'll probably need to reset them when the power comes back on.

- We recommend that you switch off and unplug TVs, DVDs, videos, etc. before a planned, and during an unplanned power cut.
- It's particularly important to switch off any satellite receiving equipment before the start of a planned power cut. Don't switch it back on until your power has been restored.
- If the power cut is unexpected, we recommend that you turn off satellite equipment straight away.

*For more specific information about your own appliances, you may find it useful to contact the manufacturer.*



# Computers

When using a PC or laptop, always save your work regularly in case there is a power cut. Some software has an auto-save facility, so check to see if this is available on your system and activate it if you can. For a planned power cut, the best advice is to close down computers, printers and other devices before the electricity is switched off. Other steps you can take include:

- Backing up valuable information regularly.
- Using an Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) device. If your electricity supply is off, the UPS will take over, giving you time to save your work and close down the PC safely. Certain UPS devices can supply power for a longer period of time, contact your computer supplier for more information about these devices.

## Telephone systems

Many telephones use 'line current' and should still operate during a power cut. We recommend that all customers have at least one telephone of this type. If your telephone has a mains plug, check to see if it has back up batteries. Without them the phone probably won't work if your electricity is switched off.

## Other equipment

Fax and answer machines are mains operated and won't work during a power cut. If you use ISDN or other computer based communication equipment, you should not start sending data before the start of a planned power cut as the operation may not have time to complete.



# Do you have any friends or family that would benefit from joining our register?

Our register is open to our customers who:

- **Are fully electrically dependent**

You may rely on medical equipment, such as a Home Kidney Dialysis Machine or Oxygen Concentrator, and even a short power cut could cause a significant impact to your health or well-being.

- **Have a critical medical condition**

You may have a condition that restricts your ability to move, or perhaps are recovering from a serious operation or illness. An interruption to your power could hinder your recovery, or mean that you would be unable to care for yourself for a prolonged period of time.

- **Require alternative methods of communication**

You may require alternative methods of communication if you are hearing or sight impaired. There may also be other reasons that you need us to communicate with you in a different way; for example, English may not be your first language.

- **Have other long-term or temporary support requirements**

Our customers who are elderly, have young children, or customers whose household is in fuel poverty, may find a power cut more difficult to deal with, and may benefit from additional advise and support.

## Get in touch

If you want to speak to us about the Priority Services Register, the information in this guide please give us a call on

**0800 169 2996** or visit

**[www.northernpowergrid.com/priority](http://www.northernpowergrid.com/priority)**

Or you can write to us:

Priority Services Manager,

Northern Powergrid,

Manor House, Station Road, Penshaw,

Houghton-le-Sprint, DH4 7LA

If your power goes off, please call us on

**0800 169 2996\***

\*If you are deaf or hard of hearing:

Text phone: **0800 028 9507**

Text relay: dial prefix **18001** then our number **0800 169 2996**

If English is not your first language:

Call: **0800 389 8294**

You can get independent help, advice and information from the following organisations...

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**Age UK (previously known as Age Concern and Help the Aged)**

Tavis House, 1-6 Tavistock Square,  
London, WC1H 9NA

Free Helpline: 0800 169 8787

[www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

[info@ageuk.org.uk](mailto:info@ageuk.org.uk)

**Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)**

105 Judd Street, London, WC1H 9NE

Helpline: 0303 123 9999

[www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)

[helpline@rnib.org.uk](mailto:helpline@rnib.org.uk)

**Action on Hearing Loss (previously known as Royal Institute for Deaf People (RNID))**

19-23 Featherstone Street,  
London, EC1Y 8SL

Free Helpline: 0808 808 0123

Free Textphone: 0808 808 9000

[www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk](http://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk)

[informationline@hearingloss.org.uk](mailto:informationline@hearingloss.org.uk)

## How can I register?

Complete our online application form  
or find out more information at  
[www.northernpowergrid.com/priority](http://www.northernpowergrid.com/priority)

**Call us** on our dedicated Priority  
Services number **0800 169 2996**

**Text phone**  
**0800 028 9507**

**Text Relay**  
Dial prefix **18001** then our  
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**Customers whose first  
language is not English**  
**0800 389 8204**



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## Spread the word...

Do you know someone who needs extra support during a power cut?

Pass this card onto a friend or family member who could benefit from being on our Priority Services Register; details of how they can join are on the back.

This also acts as a handy contact card! Just pop it in your purse or wallet and our details are always close to hand!

## The Northern Powergrid Priority Services Register

Our Priority Services Register is for our customers who feel that they need a little extra support during a power cut.

This could be for many reasons, for example if you have a medical condition, if you're elderly or disabled, if you have young children, or if you rely on electricity for medical equipment.

Powering your community...

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Powering your community...



To order this leaflet in Braille, large print, a different language or on audiotape or CD, please call **0800 169 2996**.



**[www.northernpowergrid.com/priority](http://www.northernpowergrid.com/priority)**



Priority Services Manager,  
Northern Powergrid,  
Manor House, Station Road,  
Penshaw, Houghton-le-Spring,  
DH4 7LA.



**All of our numbers are available  
24 hours a day, 365 days a year:**

**Emergency and power cut:**

The North East and  
most of North Yorkshire  
**0800 66 88 77**

West, South and East Yorkshire,  
and parts of North Yorkshire and  
northern Lincolnshire  
**0800 375 675**

**General Enquiries:**  
**0845 070 7172**



**Priority Services:**  
**0800 169 2996**

**Text phone**  
**0800 028 9507**

**Text Relay**  
Dial prefix **18001** then our  
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**Stay connected with us...**

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Copies of all our information guides can be downloaded from our website **[www.northernpowergrid.com](http://www.northernpowergrid.com)**

\*As of July 1st 2015, all 0800 numbers are free from mobiles.