

Power shortage:

Rolling power cuts

**What do I need to
consider?**

A collaboration between



swisspower

The logo for swisspower features a series of ten small, white, vertically-oriented oval shapes of increasing size from left to right, positioned above the word 'swisspower' in a lowercase, sans-serif font.

Cette brochure est également disponible en français.

Diese Broschüre ist auch in Deutsch erhältlich.

Il presente opuscolo è disponibile anche in italiano.

Este folleto también está disponible en español.

Esta brochura também está disponível em português.

Ova brošura dostupna je i na srpskom jeziku.

Kjo broshurë gjendet edhe në gjuhën shqipe.

Bu broşür Türkçe olarak da mevcuttur.

General information

A power shortage can occur at any time. The risk is real and great, especially in winter. Various factors, which can occur simultaneously or one after the other, can lead to a power shortage.

Due to the current energy crisis and the energy supply channels that are no longer secured as a result of Russia's attack on Ukraine, the risk is currently estimated to be higher.

The Federal Council would take measures if the supply of electricity were no longer guaranteed: savings, prohibitions on use, rationing and regional power cuts for a few hours at a time.

This brochure provides advice for personal contingency planning. Please keep this brochure for your reference.

If there is a shortage of electricity supply, the Federal Council may decide on various measures depending on the severity of the shortage:

- The Federal Council may make an appeal to the population to save energy.
- The Federal Council may prohibit the use of certain devices and systems.
- The Federal Council may oblige large electricity consumers to reduce their electricity consumption by a certain percentage (quota).
- If these measures do not have the required effect, the Federal Council may order rolling power cuts for a few hours as a last possible measure. This means that all electricity consumers would alternate between having no electricity and then having electricity again.

This brochure focuses on the final measure: rolling power cuts.

What are rolling power cuts?

Rolling power cuts are planned grid shut-downs during which individual districts, and the electricity consumers connected to them, are disconnected from the power grid for a certain period of time. This means that electricity will only be available at regular intervals and in certain areas. The following scenarios are possible

- **4 hours with electricity, 4 hours without electricity, 4 hours with electricity etc.**
- **12 hours with electricity, 4 hours without electricity, 4 hours with electricity, 4 hours without electricity, 12 hours with electricity etc.**
In this scenario, there is a daily window of 4 hours during which the whole of Switzerland is supplied with electricity.

When will rolling power cuts occur?

If the demand for electricity is greater than the amount of electricity produced, the power grid can collapse (what is referred to as a 'blackout'). If the other measures are not sufficient to restore the balance between electricity supply and demand, the Federal Council can order power cuts. This will only happen as a last resort to prevent a total collapse of the power grid.

How do I know if and when I will be disconnected from the power grid?

The Federal Council will provide prompt information about power cuts in a press conference. You will then be informed by your local distribution network operator at what time and at what frequency electricity will not be available in your residential area.

**How can
I prepare
now?**

Stock up

(Good advice for emergency provisions: Brochure "Expecting the unexpected")

- Stock up on several days' worth of groceries. Note that some foods can also be kept without refrigeration and can also be eaten cold or without cooking (rice, pasta, muesli, rusks, tinned food, coffee, UHT milk, dried fruit, etc.).
- If you still wish to prepare warm meals, alternative cooking equipment, e.g. a camping stove, a fondue rechaud or a gas-powered grill, is a practical way of heating food and water. When using heating and cooking appliances with a naked flame, always ensure adequate ventilation (danger of carbon monoxide poisoning).
- If you are caring for infants, small children or sick relatives, it makes sense – as a precaution – to warm up food and/or boil water and to keep it warm in thermal containers during phases with electricity.
- Make sure to have around 9 litres of drinking water per person per week available.
- Keep a supply of flash torches, batteries, candles, matches and lighters around the house to provide light in the event of a power cut. Do not leave burning candles unattended.

- Using a battery-powered or car radio will also let you receive information from the authorities in the event of a power cut.
- Warmth is especially important in winter. Thick blankets, sleeping bags and warm clothing can provide temporary relief if your heating fails during a possible power cut.
- If you have a fireplace or wood-burning stove, stock up on wood, briquettes or pellets.
- Since ATMs are also affected by power cuts and electronic means of payment, such as debit and credit cards or the option of paying with your smartphone, can fail, the Federal Office for National Economic Supply recommends always having some cash on hand.
- Soap, toilet paper, an emergency first-aid kit and medication are also key components of your emergency provisions.
- Don't forget food for your pets.

What do I need to consider if I or my relatives are in permanent need of medical care?

Stock up on a week's supply of medicines and hygiene products. Talk to your doctor about the availability of electrical devices such as oxygen or home dialysis machines etc. Private individuals who are permanently dependent on electricity for medical reasons must clarify at an early stage with the cantonal crisis management team or the nearest hospital what they should do in the event of a power cut.

**What should I
do if a rolling
power cut is
imminent?**

- **Find out early on where the nearest emergency meeting point is in your district/neighbourhood.** You can find out where these are from your district/city administration, from the district notice boards or at www.nofalltreffpunkt.ch.
- **Check that all electrical appliances that could pose a hazard when power is restored are switched off** (stove tops, irons etc.).
- **Unplug your electrical devices BEFORE the power cut begins so that they are not damaged when you switch them on again.** Voltage spikes can occur when power is restored, which can damage sensitive equipment.
- **When the power comes back, switch devices back on one at a time.** This helps avoid the risk of overloading the power grid.
- **Avoid using lifts for a quarter of an hour before the power cut.**
- **Do not park in car parks (underground or above ground) that are secured by barriers.** The barriers will no longer work if the power is switched off.
- **Avoid making unnecessary phone calls during power cuts.** This will avoid the risk of grid overload. Only call the emergency number in emergencies. Instead, use a battery-operated radio (SRF) to get information. You can obtain more information from the emergency meeting points in your district.

**What should I
consider
during the
power cut?**

Household

Will my food stay fresh in the fridge or freezer?

During the power cut, refrigerators and freezers should be opened as rarely as possible! Food will stay cold or frozen for several hours even if the device is not powered.

Will my drinking water supply be maintained during the power cut?

As a rule, the drinking water supply should be ensured. However, in many places, electric pumps are needed for a functioning drinking water supply – these would have to be operated with emergency power generators during a power cut. The drinking water supply may therefore also be interrupted. Note the recommendation for emergency provisions (9 litres of drinking water per person per week) and be sure to use water sparingly.

Will the sewage systems work during the power cut?

Electricity is required to clean waste water. For this reason, continuous cleaning of the waste water cannot be guaranteed, so you should produce as little waste water as possible. The toilet flush works using water pressure and will work as long as the drinking water supply is guaranteed.

Will my heating still work during the power cut?

Electric heating, gas and oil heating, heat pumps and district heating networks are all dependent on electricity. For this reason, your heating will no longer work if the power grid is switched off.

How do I ensure that my home stays warm?

Ventilate your home as little as possible during the power cut. Close room doors. Close shutters at night. Wear warm clothes.

Will my own photovoltaic system still work without an electricity supply?

Only if you have a non-integrated system.

What will I no longer be allowed to do?

What should I consider?

- Avoid using lifts
- If you have an electric garage door, it is better to park your car outdoors
- Raise electric blinds before the power cuts (during the day)
- Switch electric doors to manual operation

Telephone and mobile networks

Will telephones and mobile networks still work?

Wherever the electricity supply is maintained, it should be possible to make phone calls. The transmitters on mobile phone masts are equipped with batteries so that the systems can continue to run for at least an hour in the event of a power cut. Central hubs where signals from several transmission towers converge can function for up to four hours without a power supply. Main data centres are also equipped with emergency power systems to bridge the gap. However, telephone and mobile networks will fail in the event of a longer power cut.

How do I make emergency calls?

If the mobile and telephone networks no longer work, go to an emergency meeting point. You can find out where these are from your district/city administration, from the district notice boards or at www.nofalltreffpunkt.ch.

At the emergency meeting point, you will receive information on the situation and be able to make calls to the emergency services. You can find out when the emergency meeting points are open on the radio or via Alertswiss (at www.alert.swiss or on the app). Download the Alertswiss app to your smartphone early.

Obtaining information

What is the best way to obtain information?

The best way to obtain information is from the radio (SRF). Get a battery-powered radio (don't forget spare batteries) or a crank radio in advance, or use a car radio.

Will I still receive post?

The postal system would be severely affected by a power shortage. Regular postal deliveries would not be guaranteed. Delays should therefore be expected.

Will I still receive my newspaper?

Due to logistical challenges and restrictions on editorial work, the publication and delivery of daily print media cannot be guaranteed.

Medical care and emergencies

Which medical and care facilities will remain open?

Power grids for basic medical care in hospitals will, where technically possible, be exempt from power cuts and/or have emergency power solutions.

What do I need to consider if I or my relatives are in permanent need of medical devices or equipment?

Private individuals who are permanently dependent on electricity for medical reasons must clarify at an early stage with the cantonal/local crisis management team or the nearest hospital what they should do in the event of a power cut.

Will I get all the medicines I need?

Power cuts will be announced ahead of time, so please take precautions and have any medicines you need available at home.

What should I do in a medical emergency?

If you need help, try calling the usual emergency numbers. If the telephone network stops working, go to the nearest emergency meeting point or ask a neighbour for help if you cannot go to the emergency meeting point yourself. Information on the locations of the emergency meeting points can be found from your district/city administration, from the district notice boards or at www.notfalltreffpunkt.ch.

What should I do if there's a fire?

Call the fire brigade. If the telephone network stops working, go to the nearest emergency meeting point. You can find out where this is from your district/city administration, from the district notice boards or at www.notfalltreffpunkt.ch. Familiarise yourself in good time with how to handle fire extinguishers, fire blankets and fire hose cabinets (finding out where they are in the building; reading operating instructions).

Road traffic and public transport

Will I be able to use public transport?

Public transport will be severely restricted or completely unavailable during the power cuts.

Will the road infrastructure still work (traffic lights, street lighting, level crossings, barriers, etc.)?

Rolling power cuts will have an impact on road infrastructure: traffic lights and street lighting will no longer work; level crossings, barriers and tunnels (ventilation and lighting) will also be affected by power cuts.

Can I still fill up my car during rolling power cuts?

No, not at petrol stations located in the shutdown area. Fuel dispensers need electricity to work.

Air travel: Can I still fly?

The emergency power supply of the respective airports is subject to their operators; whether and when flying will be possible cannot be said at this point in time.

Shopping

Will I be able to go shopping during rolling power cuts?

Ideally, you will have already stocked up on emergency provisions so that you can feed yourself from your supply during the power cuts. If you still have to go shopping, note that retailers will also be affected by the power cuts – regular opening hours cannot be guaranteed. Take cash with you.

Will I still be able to pay with bank cards or TWINT?

No, card and mobile payment systems will no longer work. Make sure that you always have cash on hand.

How can I deal with shortages in the household?

Before going to the shop, check out possible exchange options in your neighbourhood and with friends. You should also foster solidarity with older or immobile neighbours and acquaintances – help each other out.

Work and school

Will I still have to go to work during the power cuts?

Clarify with your employer in advance what applies in your company.

Will schools be closed if rolling power cuts occur?

Schools will remain open for as long as possible.

Useful websites and information

Information on the current supply status:

Federal Office of Energy dashboard

energiedashboard.admin.ch/dashboard

Up-to-date electricity supply security information

elcom.admin.ch → **Supply security**

Federal Office for National Economic Supply

bwl.admin.ch

Website and Alertswiss app

alert.swiss/en

Emergency meeting points

notfalltreffpunkt.ch

OSTRAL, organisation for electricity in exceptional circumstances

ostral.ch

**Information film “In Kürze: Das Risiko einer Strommangel-
lage” (“Explained: the risk of an electricity shortage”)**

ostral.ch

“Nicht verschwenden” (“Don’t waste”) campaign site

dont-waste.ch

Hotline 0848 444 444

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Emergency supply checklist

Food and drink

- 9 litres of drinking water per person per week
- Rice, pasta, bulgur, legumes, etc.
- Canned vegetables, mushrooms and fruits
- Ready meals (e.g. röstis or instant soup)
- Dried meat and fish
- Rusks or crisp bread
- Muesli, dried fruit, nuts
- Hard cheeses, processed cheeses
- Flour, dry yeast
- Sugar, salt, pepper, stock cubes, oil or other fats
- Jams, honey, chocolate
- UHT milk, condensed milk
- Coffee, cocoa and tea
- Special foods (e.g. baby food or in case of food intolerance)

First-aid kit and hygiene

- Soap, disinfectant, face masks
- Toilet paper
- Personal medication

Technical equipment

- Battery-operated radio including spare batteries, crank radio
- Torch including spare batteries
- Candles, matches, lighter
- Gas cooker, fondue chaud, grill
- Power bank

Other

- Cash
- Pet food