

# Disaster Preparedness

Essential Information for COPD Patients and Oxygen Users  
Partnering with your power company can save you money or even save your life!



# Disaster Preparedness for Floods, Storms, and Fires: Essential Tips for People with COPD or an Oxygen Concentrator

Natural disasters like floods, storms, and fires can pose serious challenges for everyone, but for individuals with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or those who rely on oxygen therapy, the stakes are even higher. Preparedness is critical to ensure safety, maintain access to necessary medical equipment, and reduce health risks during emergencies. This guide provides essential tips to help you stay safe and ready, with a focus on using a portable oxygen concentrator and managing COPD.



## How New Safety Protocols Affect Respiratory Patients

Hurricane and fire season seems to start earlier and last longer every year. The recent devastating fires raging in California have reinforced the need for emergency preparedness.

Because many of the largest fires in recent years have started from high winds and downed power lines, many energy companies have enacted new safety protocols and started proactively shutting down power in sectors where high winds or other dangers are present. Of course, this presents a problem for those on oxygen concentrators or other life saving devices. Be sure to contact your power company to take advantage of safety programs and maybe even save yourself some money on your energy bills along the way.

## Power Company Programs that May be Available for those on Medical Devices



You can work with the power company in your area to stay safe and maybe even save you some money on your electric bill! You may be able to sign up for:

- Advanced notice via text or phone call for power shut-off
- Priority for getting power back on
- Immunity from surge pricing
- Rebates for generators
- Grants and stipends for alternative energy sources such as solar panels and battery storage



# Contact Your Power Company Today!

Click links below

## **Alabama**

[Alabama Power](#)

## **Alaska**

[Alaska Electric Light and Power](#)

## **Arizona**

[Arizona Public Service](#)

## **Arkansas**

[Entergy Arkansas](#)

## **California**

[Pacific Gas and Electric](#)  
[Southern California Edison](#)  
[Pacific Power](#)

## **Colorado**

[Xcel Energy](#)  
[Black Hills Energy](#)

## **Connecticut**

[Eversource](#)  
[United Illuminating](#)

## **Delaware**

[Delmarva Power](#)

## **Florida**

[Duke Energy](#)  
[Florida Power and Light](#)

## **Georgia**

[Sumpter Electric Cooperative](#)

## **Hawaii**

[Hawaiian Electric](#)

## **Idaho**

[Idaho Power](#)  
[Rocky Mountain Power](#)  
[Enbridge](#)

## **Illinois**

[Amren](#)

## **Indiana**

[Indiana Michigan Power](#)  
[AES Indiana](#)  
[NIPSCO](#)

## **Iowa**

[MidAmerican Energy Company](#)  
[Alliant Energy](#)

## **Kansas**

[Eversource](#)

## **Kentucky**

[Kentucky Power](#)

## **Louisiana**

[South Western Electric Power Company](#)

## **Maine**

[Central Maine Power](#)

## **Maryland**

[Baltimore Gas and Electric](#)  
[First Energy](#)  
[Delmarva Power](#)

## **Massachusetts**

[National Grid US](#)  
[Eversource](#)

## **Michigan**

[Indiana Michigan Power](#)  
[Consumer Energy](#)  
[Xcel Energy](#)

## **Minnesota**

[East Central Energy](#)  
[Minnesota Power](#)  
[Xcel Energy](#)  
[Otter Tail Power](#)

## **Mississippi**

[Mississippi Power](#)

## **Missouri**

[Amren](#)

## **Montana**

[North Western Energy](#)  
[Montana Dakota Utilities Co.](#)

## **Nebraska**

[North Western Energy](#)

## **Nevada**

[Nevada Energy](#)

## **New Hampshire**

[Eversource](#)

## **New Jersey**

[First Energy](#)

## **New Mexico**

[Public Service Company of New Mexico](#)

## **New York**

[First Energy](#)  
[National Grid](#)  
[ConEdison](#)

## **North Carolina**

[Dominion Energy](#)

## **North Dakota**

[Otter Tail Power Company](#)  
[Montana Dakota Utilities](#)

## **Ohio**

[Ohio Edison/First Energy](#)  
[Dominion Energy](#)

## **Oklahoma**

[Public Service Oklahoma](#)  
[Oklahoma Gas and Electric](#)

## **Oregon**

[Pacific Power](#)

## **Pennsylvania**

[First Energy](#)

## **Rhode Island**

[Rhode Island Energy](#)

## **South Carolina**

[Dominion Energy](#)

## **South Dakota**

[North Western Energy](#)  
[Otter Tail Power Company](#)  
[Montana Dakota Utilities](#)

## **Tennessee**

[Middle Tennessee Electric](#)  
[Nashville Electric Service](#)

## **Texas**

[Oncor](#)

## **Utah**

[Enbridge](#)  
[Rocky Mountain Power](#)

## **Vermont**

[Green Mountain Power](#)

## **Virginia**

[Dominion Energy](#)

## **Washington**

[Pacific Power](#)

## **Washington D.C.**

[PEPCO](#)

## **West Virginia**

[First Energy](#)

## **Wisconsin**

[Alliant Energy](#)  
[Wisconsin Public Service](#)  
[Madison Gas and Electric](#)

## **Wyoming**

[Rocky Mountain Power](#)  
[Enbridge](#)  
[Montana Dakota Utility](#)



## Escalate Requests to Managing Agencies

If your power company wasn't on the list, that means that at the time that this handbook was created, they hadn't implemented any of these programs, or we weren't able to find information on their website. We encourage you to contact them and let them know that as a customer, you feel that these initiatives would be valuable to you. If they don't seem amenable to starting any of these programs, you may contact your State Energy Office. Links can be found on the following page.

State Energy Offices (SEOs) play a vital role in shaping and implementing energy policies at the state level. Their responsibilities vary by state but generally include the following key functions:

### **1. Energy Policy Development**

- Develop and implement state energy policies and plans.
- Work on renewable energy, energy efficiency, and climate-related goals.

### **2. Energy Program Administration**

- Administer state and federal energy programs (e.g., energy efficiency upgrades, renewable energy grants).
- Distribute funding, such as federal grants from programs like the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) or the State Energy Program (SEP).

### **3. Energy Efficiency Initiatives**

- Promote energy conservation measures for residential, commercial, and industrial sectors.
- Support retrofitting projects to improve energy efficiency in buildings and infrastructure.

### **4. Renewable Energy Promotion**

- Encourage the development and adoption of renewable energy sources, such as solar, wind, and geothermal.
- Support renewable energy research, pilot projects, and grid integration.

### **5. Energy Resilience and Emergency Preparedness**

- Plan for energy resilience during natural disasters or grid disruptions.
- Coordinate with utilities and other entities for energy reliability and disaster recovery.

### **6. Public Outreach and Education**

- Raise awareness about energy-saving practices and renewable energy options.
- Provide technical assistance and resources to businesses and homeowners.

### **7. Economic Development**

- Foster energy-related economic growth by attracting clean energy industries and jobs.
- Support workforce training for energy efficiency and renewable energy careers.

### **8. Regulatory and Technical Support**

- Collaborate with other state agencies, local governments, and utilities on energy-related regulations and initiatives.
- Provide technical expertise for energy infrastructure projects.

### **9. Energy Data Collection and Analysis**

- Collect and analyze energy data to guide policy decisions.
- Monitor energy trends, consumption, and emissions in the state.



# Links to State Energy Offices

## **Alabama**

[Alabama State Energy Program](#)

## **Alaska**

[Alaska Energy Authority](#)

## **Arizona**

[Arizona Office of Grants and Federal Resources](#)

## **Arkansas**

[Arkansas Energy Office](#)

## **California**

[California Energy Commission](#)

## **Colorado**

[Colorado Energy Office](#)

## **Connecticut**

[Energize Connecticut](#)

## **Delaware**

[Delaware Division of Energy and Climate](#)

## **Florida**

[Florida Office of Energy](#)

## **Georgia**

[Georgia Environmental Finance Authority - Energy Resource Division](#)

## **Hawaii**

[Hawaii State Energy Office](#)

## **Idaho**

[Idaho Energy and Mineral Resources](#)

## **Illinois**

[Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Office of Energy](#)

## **Indiana**

[Indiana Office of Energy Development](#)

## **Iowa**

[Iowa Energy Office](#)

## **Kansas**

[Kansas Energy Office](#)

## **Kentucky**

[Kentucky Office of Energy Policy](#)

## **Louisiana**

[Louisiana State Energy Office](#)

## **Maine**

[Maine Energy Office](#)

## **Maryland**

[Maryland Energy Administration](#)

## **Massachusetts**

[Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources](#)

## **Michigan**

[Michigan Agency of Energy](#)

## **Minnesota**

[Minnesota Department of Commerce](#)

## **Mississippi**

[Mississippi Energy Services](#)

## **Missouri**

[Missouri Department of Natural Resources - Division of Energy](#)

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**Montana**

[Montana Department of  
Environmental Quality](#)

**Nebraska**

[Nebraska Energy Office](#)

**Nevada**

[Nevada Governor's Office of Energy](#)

**New Hampshire**

[New Hampshire Office of Strategic  
Initiatives - Energy Division](#)

**New Jersey**

[New Jersey Division of Energy](#)

**New Mexico**

[New Mexico Energy Conservation  
and Management Division](#)

**New York**

[New York State Energy Research  
and Development Authority](#)

**North Carolina**

[North Carolina State Energy Office](#)

**North Dakota**

[North Dakota Energy Office](#)

**Ohio**

[Ohio Energy Efficiency Program](#)

**Oklahoma**

[Oklahoma Secretary of  
Energy and Environment](#)

**Oregon**

[Oregon Department of Energy](#)

**Pennsylvania**

[Pennsylvania Department of  
Environmental Protection -  
Energy Programs Office](#)

**Rhode Island**

[State of Rhode Island Office  
of Energy Resources](#)

**South Carolina**

[South Carolina Energy Office](#)

**South Dakota**

[South Dakota Department of  
Environment and Natural Resources](#)

**Tennessee**

[Tennessee Department of  
Environment and Conservation](#)

**Texas**

[Texas State Energy  
Conservation Office](#)

**Utah**

[Utah Office of Energy Development](#)

**Vermont**

[State of Vermont Department  
of Public Service](#)

**Virginia**

[Virginia Department of Energy](#)

**Washington**

[Washington State Energy Office](#)

**Washington D.C.**

[District of Columbia Department of  
Energy and Environment](#)

**West Virginia**

[West Virginia Office of Energy](#)

**Wisconsin**

[Wisconsin Office of  
Energy Innovation](#)

**Wyoming**

[Wyoming State Energy Office](#)





## General Disaster Preparedness Tips

Create an Emergency Kit Assemble a well-stocked emergency kit specifically tailored to your needs. Include:

- Medications (at least a two-week supply) and prescriptions.
- Portable oxygen concentrator (POC) with extra batteries and chargers. Your D/C power cord is especially important since evacuation routes often have a huge backup.
- Keep your concentrator batteries charged. It will help them maintain their charge capacity and may save your life in an emergency.
- Non-perishable snacks and water.
- A first aid kit.
- Important documents like medical records, insurance details, and emergency contact numbers.

## Have a Communication Plan

- Share your emergency plan with family, friends, or caregivers.
- Keep a list of emergency numbers, including your healthcare provider and local emergency services.
- Consider a medical alert system or app that notifies others in case of an emergency.
- Stay Informed. Watch news alerts and have a battery power radio in case the electricity goes out.
- Sign up for local weather alerts and emergency notifications.
- Know evacuation routes and shelter locations. There are often "special needs shelters" that are set up for charging medical devices and accommodating those with medical needs. Be sure to learn where those are in your area in advance.
- If you have friends or family out of the area, evacuate early if you can.

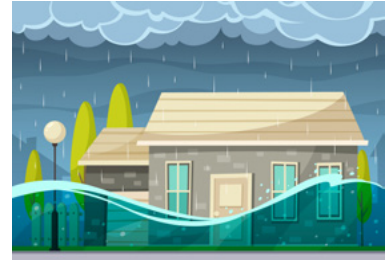
## Prepare Your Home

- Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Keep an emergency exit clear of obstacles.
- Ensure your oxygen equipment is secure and protected from damage.
- Invest in air cleaners and plastic sheeting so that you can cordon off an area if the air in your area is unhealthy but you are not being evacuated.

## Flood Preparedness

Floods can occur with little warning, making it crucial to act fast.

- Relocate Your Oxygen Equipment
- Store your POC and oxygen tanks in waterproof, high locations away from potential flooding.
- Use waterproof bags to protect smaller medical devices.
- Keep your concentrator, charging cords and batteries together in a go bag so you can grab them at a moment's notice.
- Have a Waterproof Emergency Kit
- Pack your medications and other essentials in waterproof containers.
- Include a battery-operated flashlight and radio.
- Do not wait for floodwaters to rise. If evacuation is advised, leave as early as possible.
- Ensure your POC and extra batteries are charged and in good working order.



### **Avoid Contaminated Air**

Floods often lead to mold and bacterial growth, which are both extremely dangerous for those with a respiratory condition.

Wear a mask or respirator if you need to clean or be near flood-damaged areas. If possible remain, in another location until your home can be fully dried, and aired out with all mold and mildew cleaned up.

## Storm Preparedness

Whether it's snow, rain, or even just wind, severe storms can disrupt power supplies and create barriers to accessing medical care.

### **Backup Power Options**

- Invest in a generator or portable power station to keep your oxygen concentrator functioning during outages.
- Ensure you have extra batteries for your oxygen equipment.



### **Stay Indoors**

- Avoid exposure to wind, rain, and lightning.
- Stay in a safe area of your home away from windows and doors.

### **Charge Your Devices**

- Keep your oxygen concentrator batteries, phone, and other essential devices fully charged when a storm is predicted.

### **Monitor Air Quality**

- Storms can stir up pollutants and allergens. Use air purifiers and stay indoors as much as possible.
- Download an app on your phone that monitors air quality.
- You can also go to [www.Airnow.gov](http://www.Airnow.gov) to find out what the air quality is.



## **Know Where Emergency Power Will Be Available**

- Places like hospitals, fire stations and police buildings likely have emergency generators and will be able to assist those on life saving devices, such as oxygen concentrators that require power or charging.

## **Fire Preparedness**

Wildfires or house fires can be particularly dangerous for people with COPD due to smoke inhalation and air pollution.

### **Minimize Smoke Exposure**

- Stay indoors with windows and doors closed.
- Use air purifiers with HEPA filters to reduce indoor pollutants.
- Wear an N95 mask if you must go outside.



### **Evacuate Immediately if Necessary**

- Have a “go bag” ready with your emergency kit and oxygen equipment.
- Keep your vehicle fueled and ready to leave quickly.

### **Plan for Oxygen Safety**

- Oxygen is flammable, so avoid open flames or smoking near your equipment.
- Store oxygen tanks in a cool, ventilated area away from direct sunlight or heat sources.

## **Monitor Air Quality Index (AQI)**

Use apps or websites to track Air Quality Index levels. Avoid outdoor activities when air quality is poor.

### **What Do the Air Quality Index Numbers Mean**

The U.S Environmental Protection Agency runs the Air Quality Index which reports the quality of outdoor air. The AQI measures the density of the five major pollutants in the air. The pollutants are ozone, particulates, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, and nitrogen dioxide.



The scale goes from 0 - 500. Anything over 300 is considered hazardous and everyone without breathing protection should leave the area immediately. The scale is as follows:

- 0 - 50 **Green** or good which means there is little risk
- 51 - 100 **Yellow** or moderate which means that air quality is acceptable
- 101 - 150 is **Orange** meaning unhealthy for sensitive groups such as those with COPD or other respiratory conditions
- 151 - 200 is **Red** or poor which means those in sensitive groups are at risk of serious health effects and healthy groups are at risk as well
- 201 - 300 is **Purple** and a health alert is issued for everyone
- 301+ is **Maroon** and air quality is at emergency conditions and everyone should leave the area as soon as possible

# Helpful Resources During and After a Disaster

## Apps for Disaster Preparedness and Response

### FEMA App

- Real-time weather alerts, disaster resources, and recovery information (USA).
- [iOS](#) | [Android](#)



### American Red Cross Apps

- Includes apps for emergency alerts, first aid, blood donations, and shelter locations.
- Red Cross App Suite [iOS](#) | [Android](#)

### Zello

- Push-to-talk app for communication when cellular networks are unreliable.
- [iOS](#) | [Android](#)

### PulsePoint

- Sends alerts for nearby cardiac emergencies and offers CPR guidance.
- [iOS](#) | [Android](#)

### Life360

- Family location tracking, check-ins, and safety alerts.
- [iOS](#) | [Android](#)

### NOAA Weather Radar

- Real-time weather alerts and forecasts.
- [iOS](#) | [Android](#)

## Websites for Disaster Information and Resources

### Ready.gov

- Comprehensive disaster preparedness resources (USA).
- Visit [Ready.gov](#)

### National Weather Service (NWS)

- Local weather alerts and warnings.
- Visit [Weather.gov](#)

### ReliefWeb

- Global updates on disasters and humanitarian crises.
- Visit [ReliefWeb.int](#)

### CDC Emergency Preparedness

- Guidance for health-related emergencies, including pandemics.
- Visit [CDC Emergency Preparedness](#)

## **International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)**

- Global disaster response and preparedness resources.
- Visit [IFRC.org](https://www.ifrc.org)

## **National Hurricane Center**

- Real-time updates on hurricanes and tropical storms.
- Visit [NHC.gov](https://www.nhc.noaa.gov)

## **Organizations That Provide Disaster Support**

### **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)**

- Disaster relief and recovery assistance (USA).
- [FEMA Website](https://www.fema.gov)

### **American Red Cross**

- Emergency shelters, blood donations, and disaster recovery aid.
- [Red Cross Website](https://www.redcross.org)

### **Team Rubicon**

- Disaster response organization staffed by military veterans and first responders.
- [Team Rubicon Website](https://www.teamrubicon.com)

### **Salvation Army Emergency Disaster Services**

- Provides food, shelter, and financial aid during disasters.
- [Salvation Army EDS Website](https://www.salvationarmyusa.org/eds)

### **World Food Programme (WFP)**

- Global leader in emergency food assistance.
- [WFP Website](https://www.wfp.org)

### **Doctors Without Borders (Médecins Sans Frontières)**

- Medical assistance in global disaster zones.
- [MSF Website](https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org)

## **Local Emergency Management Agencies**

Search for your city, county, or state emergency management website for localized support and alerts.

## **Additional Resources**

### **211 Services**

- Call or visit [211.org](https://211.org) for local resources, including shelter, food, and healthcare.

### **Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System (GDACS)**

- Alerts on global disasters like earthquakes and floods.
- [GDACS Website](https://www.gdacs.org)

## **Oxygen Needs**

### **OxiMedical Respiratory**

- Portable Oxygen Concentrators and accessories
- 1-888-643-4921 | [OxiMedical.com](https://www.oximedical.com)





# Be Smart, Be Prepared!

## General Checklist

- ☐ Bottled Water
- ☐ Battery Powered Radio
- ☐ Flashlights
- ☐ Lighters, Matches, and Candles
- ☐ First Aid Kit
- ☐ Extra Glasses/Contact Supplies
- ☐ Packaged and Canned Food
- ☐ Extra Blankets and Towels
- ☐ Cash and Credit Cards
- ☐ Clothing, Shoes and Socks
- ☐ Insurance Information and Cards
- ☐ List of Important Phone Numbers
- ☐ Copies of Prescriptions
- ☐ Extra Medications
- ☐ Face Coverings (N95 Masks)
- ☐ Maps of Evacuation Routes
- ☐ Pet Food, Bowls and Leashes
- ☐ Garbage Bags
- ☐ Hand Sanitizer and Towelettes
- ☐ Spray Bottle with Cleaner
- ☐ Paper Towels and Toilet Paper
- ☐ Phone and Tablet Chargers
- ☐ Utility Knife
- ☐ Duct, Packing and Masking Tape
- ☐ Permanent Marker



## Oxygen Checklist

- ☐ Charged Batteries
- ☐ Batteries for CPAP, BiPAP, Etc.
- ☐ Extra Tubing
- ☐ Spare Cannulas
- ☐ Alcohol Wipes
- ☐ A/C Power Cord
- ☐ D/C Power Cord
- ☐ Extra Particle Filters
- ☐ Owner's Manual
- ☐ Canned Air and Q-tips

## Staying Prepared

- Test your concentrator regularly if you don't use it all the time. Every 2-3 weeks, charge the battery to 100% and use the concentrator until battery is completely depleted. Charge fully before storing.
- Test all batteries and charge them fully at least once every 2 - 3 weeks.
- Consider an external battery charger.