

## Local help and assistance

Widespread power outages following a major storm event has left many Aucklanders facing days without essential household needs. This is distressing, stressful and can be lonely and frightening for vulnerable or isolated households. We've put together some useful information on how to cope during a power outage and who to contact for help.

**Remember, you are not alone – there are many people here to help you or provide advice.**

## Let's help each other out

Think about visiting neighbours, friends and family that could need your help.

Take some comfort items with you like a thermos of hot water for tea and coffee, hot water bottles and extra blankets, a camp stove and fresh food, spare batteries for torches, and an alternative power source to charge a mobile phone.

If you're concerned about a neighbour, friend, or loved one let one of the support agencies in this brochure know and we'll see what we can do to help.

## Heating, lighting and cooking

DON'T be tempted to use unsafe ways to heat your home. Only use fireplaces that have been safety checked, follow the manufacturer's advice when using gas heaters, NEVER use outdoor gas heaters inside or try to use your BBQ for heating.

DO boil water on your camp stove or BBQ for hot water bottles, wear extra layers of clothing and use extra blankets, close internal doors and curtains to retain heat.

Use camp stoves in well-ventilated places and make sure food is cooked thoroughly before eating.

Take care with candles or use battery-powered lanterns or torches instead, to prevent fire risk.

If using a generator ensure you have enough fuel to keep it going.

## Contact us

### Auckland Council

For news, building control, council information and assistance:

**09 301 0101**

For welfare concerns and assistance:

**0800 22 22 00**

Visit [ourauckland.govt.nz](http://ourauckland.govt.nz) for more information

### Ministry of Social Development

For financial assistance, benefits and housing:

**0800 559 009**

### Lifeline

Need to talk? Free call or free text any time for support from a trained counsellor:

**0800 543 354 or text 4357**

### Healthline

Are you feeling unwell – but not sure whether to see a doctor? Do you need advice about a friend or family who is sick? Healthline nurses can help you any time.

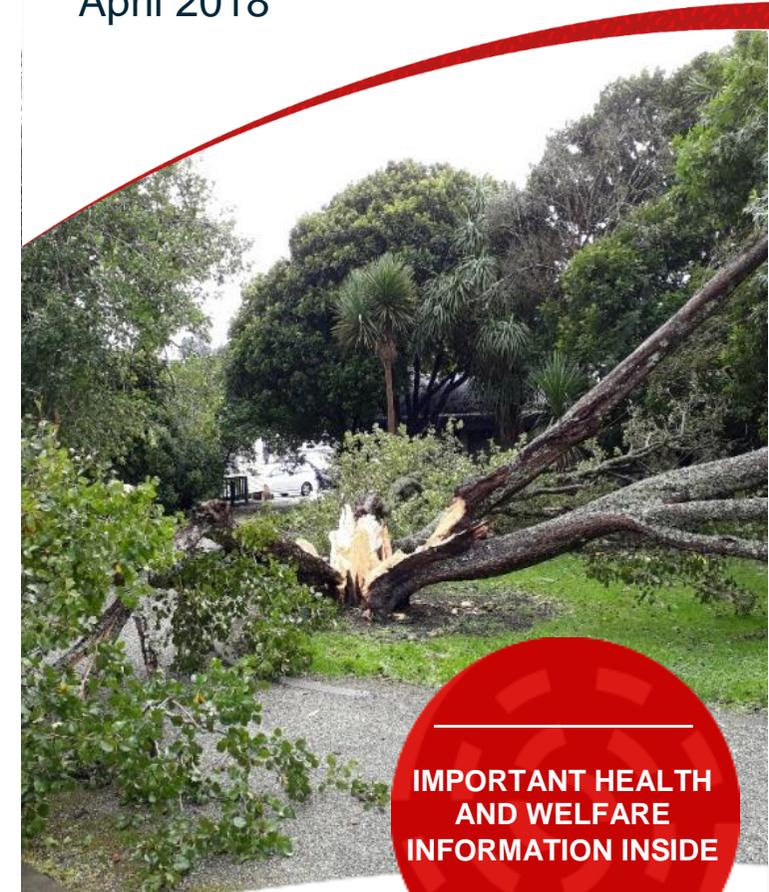
**0800 611 116**

**If life or property is at risk, call 111.**



# Helping you cope during a power outage

April 2018



**IMPORTANT HEALTH AND WELFARE INFORMATION INSIDE**

---

## Medical help and advice

Contact your GP if you're concerned about health issues. Contact your health provider if you need support like home support services (including those you currently receive).

## Animal welfare

Pets are just as likely to become unwell by consuming unsafe food. If you are disposing food due to the power outage and if it is not safe for you to eat, it is not safe for your pets to eat. If you are boiling water to drink, do the same for your pets.

If your stock drinking water supply is reliant on power to fill troughs, you will need to keep an eye on stock water to ensure it does not run out.

## Security and crime prevention

Unfortunately emergency situations can also prompt criminal activity. Check that neighbours properties are secure and remember, if you see anyone committing a crime or behaving suspiciously, phone 111 and report it to Police. If they are in a vehicle, write down the number plate, vehicle description and any other information. DO NOT put yourself in harm's way.

## Toilet facilities

We encourage anyone without access to a toilet or drinking water because of the power outage to phone Auckland Council on 0800 22 22 00. We will take your details and get a portaloos and potable drinking water source for you.

## Hot water

Electric hot water in some parts of Auckland is on a separate network of lines to electricity. This means some people may have power but no hot water. If your power has been restored but you have no hot water, contact Vector on 0508 VECTOR (0508 832 867).

Vector advises customers to be prepared for wait times of several days before hot water can be restored.

---

## Staying up to date and in touch

Listen to the radio for up to date news and advice. If you don't have a battery operated radio, perhaps listen in your car. Conserve phone battery; limit mobile calls and data use (which drains your battery).

## Make use of local community facilities

Drop into your local library or community hub to charge your phone. Libraries also have free internet and a warm place to sit. Auckland Council Leisure Centres and YMCA's across the region are offering hot showers.

**If you're driving and traffic lights are out, remember to follow the road code and give way rules.**

## Financial and housing assistance

The Ministry of Social Development might be able to help with urgent or unexpected costs like petrol, food or furniture; living expenses like medical costs, house repairs or maintenance, appliance replacement, bedding, food, rent and power bills.

You can also talk to the Ministry about loss of income because of the storm, benefit and housing assistance.

You don't have to be on a benefit. You may have to pay the money back depending on your situation. Phone the Ministry on 0800 559 009 to discuss your situation.

## Insurance

Many insurers provide cover for food spoilage as a result of a power outage. They may also cover the cost of temporary accommodation if you can't stay at home and claim support if your home or property has been damaged during the storm.

Check your policy, phone your insurer and take photographs of the items you're claiming for – even your spoiled food!

---

## Food safety and illness prevention

Take care with food from your fridge and freezer to avoid food poisoning and manage spoilage issues. After more than two days without power, highly perishable foods may not be safe to eat.

- Throw out rotten or contaminated food quickly so it doesn't spoil other food in the fridge.
- You can still eat food like raw vegetables, cheese and bread.
- Dispose of any food from the freezer which has thawed out and been at room temperature for longer than two hours.
- When the power comes back on, it is important not to refreeze food that has defrosted.
- If the frozen food has ice crystals and the packaging is intact then it can be refrozen.
- If you are unsure, have a closer look and smell. If the colour has changed, it has a slimy texture or if it smells off, it probably is off.
- If you eat food that has gone off, you can risk infection from salmonella, campylobacter and a range of food poisoning bacteria.

---

Maintaining hygiene around food preparation and cooking requires more thought than normal.

- Always wash and dry your hands before preparing food – if water is in short supply keep some in a bowl with disinfectant.
- Ensure all utensils are clean before use.
- Cook food thoroughly.