What to Do When the Power Goes Out

During an extended power outage, a corded (traditional) phone will usually keep working. If it doesn’t though, the best way to help yourself is by being prepared before the outage.

Steps to Get Emergency Help

Even if the VoIP service provider can automatically provide the callback phone number and address, help may still be delayed if the 9-1-1 center doesn’t have the right information. Verify with the 9-1-1 call taker that the address they have for you is your physical address, not your billing address.

- Listen carefully to the 9-1-1 call taker, providing the correct address when asked.
- Follow up any address change with your VoIP service provider.
- If traveling with a laptop computer, contact your service provider to find out how your VoIP service works.

Here are a few simple steps:

1. Install a UPS (uninterrupted power supply) unit on your home computer for VoIP connectivity. Doing this may buy some VoIP time, but a UPS is temporary until power is restored.
2. Keep cordless phone batteries charged at all times.

VoIP service providers and the 9-1-1 industry are working to ensure that all VoIP phone service has access to

For more information, contact the Washington State Enhanced 9-1-1 Program at 800-562-6108 or visit our Web site at www.emd.wa.gov
When considering replacing a traditional landline telephone with VoIP (broadband) phone service, verify with your VoIP service provider the emergency calling features on your VoIP phone and understand the potential limitations of 9-1-1.

Questions for VoIP Service Providers:
1. Will enhanced 9-1-1 work from this phone?
2. Will my name, address and callback number be automatically provided to the 9-1-1 center?
3. Will my call be sent to the 9-1-1 answering center in my community?
4. Will the address provided to emergency responders be my physical address rather than the billing address?

If the VoIP phone does not provide enhanced 9-1-1 service (name, address and callback number), tell others who use the VoIP home phone (family members, children, babysitters, neighbors and friends) that 9-1-1 may not work. Emergency 9-1-1 calls must instead be made on a wireless or traditional phone. Your life or a loved one's life could depend on sharing this information.

Do You Know?
- Even if a VoIP phone is programmed to call 9-1-1, the call may not route to the correct answering center.
- The call may be directed to a non-emergency number and not be given the same answering priority as a 9-1-1 call.
- The name, address and callback phone number may not be provided to the answering center. If the caller is unable to speak, help may not be sent.

Subscribe to VoIP phone service because:
1. they can have one number where they can always be reached; and,
2. they save money with free long-distance calls. However, an uninformed choice may cost a loved one's life. While a VoIP phone may look like a traditional phone, it connects to the Internet, not a telephone line.