



15 South Mary Lake Rd, Port Sydney, ON P0B1L0
Phone: 705-385-2223 Fax: 705-385-1636
Website: hpbacanada.org

Be prepared when your power goes out this winter

Port Sydney, Ontario (January 25, 2017) - Living in Canada, we've all experienced a bad winter storm, such as the one expected in Eastern Canada. Freezing temperatures, piles of snow and, every so often, the power goes out. This begs the question: Is your home ready for a power outage? Laura Litchfield, Executive Director HPBAC, provides useful tips on how to use wood and gas burning stoves when the power goes out.

Be Prepared

It's important to be prepared for power outages. Be sure to have enough water (2 litres per person, per day) and non-perishable food available for up to 72 hours.

Heating Your Home

Are you prepared for your furnace and stove to be turned off for an extended period of time? Luckily, there are many products available that don't run on electricity. Wood and gas fireplaces, stoves and inserts are a great addition to the home, especially when the power is out. Gas hearth appliances are actually designed to operate during a power failure. Some generate their own electricity or have battery back-up systems. It's important to know which system you have for circumstances such as this.

Wood fireplaces, stoves and inserts are also a great alternative heat source. Be sure to have an adequate supply of fuel on hand. The radiant heat these units produce can warm your living spaces for days when necessary, despite not having an operating fan.

Using your Wood or Gas Stove for Heating and Cooking

When necessity demands some wood or gas burning stoves can also be used for heating food and water on top of the stove. Some wood and gas models have a second top layer. To improve the heat conductivity on these stoves, place your cook pot directly on the inner top. If your model is equipped with a trivet, remove it to access the inner top and maximize the heat conducted from the stove top. Some cook stoves even include an oven or a water reservoir for cooking and washing. Ovens or Dutch ovens can also be purchased separately to allow for even cooking on a stove. Take care to ensure there is not risk of the pot tipping over and it's a good idea to purchase a thermometer with these units to maintain the heat more easily while cooking.

Cooking on your wood stove does require some forethought to allow the stove to function properly. Unlike an electric stove top there is no dial to regulate the temperature. You control the heat by the amount of wood you place in the stove and attention is required to manage the heat properly. For high heat, it's important to establish a good, large fire. For slow cooking food, such as chili, soup or leftovers, the fire should burn low and steady for a long time by adding only one or 2 pieces of wood at more frequent intervals. You can also let the fire die down to a bed of coals and cook foods in a small Dutch

oven or a foil packet directly on the hot bed of coals. Practice cooking on your wood stove before a power outage occurs to give yourself a better idea of how your wood stove will heat and cook foods!

Cooking Without Electricity

For many Canadians with gas stove tops, these hearth appliances will continue to work even if the power is out. Similar to your water supply, natural gas continues to be delivered during a power outage because back-up generators are used by your supplier to maintain the delivery of gas. Propane fueled gas tops also work during power failure. Gas stoves are equipped with both oven and cooktop valves that not only adjust the flame height, they also adjust the heat output up or down. For slower cooking foods, turn the control valve to a lower setting. Do not use your gas range as a source of heat for your home given the risk of producing Carbon Monoxide over prolonged usage. As with woodstoves, we recommend you become familiar with how your gas stove cooks at different regulator settings before you lose power.

Another great appliance to use during a power outage is your barbecue! Although this may seem like a surprise to some, 61% of grill owners continue to grill all year long, according to the Hearth, Patio and Barbecue Association's (HPBA) 2015 State of the Barbecue Industry Report. Although winter grilling is a bit slower compared to grilling in the summer months, it is still a great way to prepare foods – even when the power isn't out.

Make sure you are dressed for winter weather before beginning your grill session. It's important to make sure your grill is positioned away from surrounding buildings and is never used indoors or inside a garage. Be prepared with a fire extinguisher and water on hand in case of an accident, and make sure you inspect your grill for critters before firing it up. You might consider purchasing a head lamp to ensure adequate lighting and stocking up with extra fuel for these situations. The barbecue will take longer to heat up in freezing temperatures and will require more fuel to maintain temperatures, especially if the lid is opened frequently while cooking. The HPBA estimates cook times are about 25% longer when cooking out in the cold.

Make sure you are prepared for when the unexpected occurs. Hearth and barbecue products are a great addition to your home under any circumstance, but can become a crucial appliance during a power outage. Be sure to always follow the safety instructions and stay warm through the winter months!

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About the Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association of Canada (HPBAC)

The Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association of Canada (HPBAC), is the Canadian industry association for manufacturers, retailers, distributors, representatives, service firms and allied associates for all types of barbecue, patio and hearth appliances, fuels and accessories. The association provides professional member services and industry support in education, statistics, government relations, marketing, advertising and consumer education. For more information visit <http://www.hpbacanada.org/>.

HPBAC Executive Director, Laura Litchfield is available for comment and can be reached at laura@hpbacanada.org, 705-385-2223, ext 1