

Storms, lightning, electricity and you

Wild storms, lightning strikes, strong winds and driving rain can all play havoc with the power supply. Darwin and surrounding areas are the most lightning prone in the world, due not only to our location in the tropics, but also because ironstone in the ground attracts lightning. In Central Australia too, wild storms can cause upheaval and damage.

Prepare for the storm season

Take precautions by conducting a basic inspection around your property during September or October, before the main storm season.

- 1 Make sure any loose items that could become missiles during a storm are secured, or have a place they can be stored quickly. This includes outside furniture, toys, gardening equipment, timber and spare parts.
- 2 Examine the [trees and palms near powerlines](#) on your property and arrange to have them trimmed if necessary. Hot weather makes powerlines sag, needing greater clearance in the warmer months.
- 3 Check your overflow relief gully (ORG) is free from objects sitting on top of it or pipes draining into it. During heavy rain the ORG ensures any sewage overflows happen outside your house, not in it. The ORG is a small drain covered by a grate located next to your house.
- 4 Most general household appliances are able to cope with small power surges, but can be unplugged before a storm.
- 5 For your computer, television and stereo equipment, a plug-in surge protector can be installed between the appliance and the power supply. Surge protection devices limit the voltage to the appliance.
- 6 For computers, you could also consider using an uninterruptible power supply (UPS) to protect against surges and provide back-up power if there is a supply interruption. Talk to your electrical retailer or computer supplier about the advantages of a UPS and other surge protection devices.

While surge protectors will protect your equipment from minor power surges (small voltage change), they will not protect equipment from a direct or close lightning strike (high voltage change). Lightning strikes can send tens of thousands of volts through the electrical system or phone lines.

For more information on storm and cyclone preparations go to powerwater.com.au

During the storm

As the storm approaches, unplug every appliance with sensitive electronics – that means things like computers, televisions and sound systems. This is the safest and best protection during a storm.

Store any loose items in case of high winds – if time is running short, some rust-proof items can be submerged in the pool.

Use a torch rather than candles. Candles can be knocked over and cause a fire.

Have a transistor radio with batteries and listen to the local station for updates. Power and Water provides local radio stations with updates if all services are cut.

You could also follow [PowerWaterCorp](#) on [Twitter](#).

If the lights dim for a moment, that means less power than normal is reaching your home.

After the storm

Inspect around your home and property for any damage.

If you see a situation that is life threatening, call 000 or the Power and Water emergency line on 1800 245 090 immediately.

If you see any powerlines down or trees blown onto the lines, stay well clear of them and call Power and Water's emergency line immediately. Ensure that others stay away too.

If you see a burst water main you can also call Power and Water's emergency line.

If you are experiencing a 'brown out' or reduced power and your lights are dimmed, but not out, phone us on 1800 245 092.

Call 1800 245 092 for all non life threatening power, water and sewage related faults.