Power outages and battery backups

Summer storms knock the power out often here. A battery backup buys time to shut down safely, not hours of work.

What a battery backup does

A battery backup (a UPS) sits between the wall and your equipment. When power drops or flickers, it keeps things running for a few minutes, smooths out surges, and gives servers time to shut down properly instead of crashing.

DOES

Bridges blinks

Keeps you running through flickers and short drops.

DOES

Safe shutdown

Gives servers time to close files cleanly.

DOESN'T

Run all day

Most last 5 to 20 minutes, not hours.

What should be on one

- [ ] Servers and storage
- [ ] Network switches
- [ ] Computers that can't lose work
- [ ] Firewall and internet modem
- [ ] Phone system equipment
- [ ] Not printers or space heaters

Keep them working

- [ ] Batteries wear out every **3 to 5 years**. Write the install date on a label
- [ ] A beeping battery backup is asking for help. Tell IT, don't unplug it
- [ ] Servers should be set to shut down on their own when the battery runs low
- [ ] Don't plug a battery backup into a power strip, or a power strip into it

Generators

- Portable generator power can be rough. Keep battery backups between it and your equipment.
- Never run a generator indoors or near open windows.
- Have an electrician install a transfer switch. Never plug a generator into a wall outlet.

When the power goes out

1. **Save your work and close files.**
   The battery is a countdown, not a power plant.
2. **Shut down computers you don't need.**
   That leaves more battery for the server and network.
3. **Out longer than 10 minutes?**
   Shut down servers properly, or ask IT to do it.
4. **Power back on?**
   Wait a few minutes for it to settle before turning things back on.

> **Not sure how long yours will last?**
> Ask IT to check the batteries and set servers to shut down safely on their own.