

Getting through a power outage with your alarm

When your power goes out your alarm will operate differently. We hope these notice will help you understand what to expect from your alarm and what you can do.

Your alarm system has two sources of power.

1. The Transformer – usually a large tan box plugged into one of your electrical receptacles. It is normal for this transformer to be warm to the touch.
2. A rechargeable battery located inside the locked metal box.

RED POWER/AC LIGHT: Your alarm keypad has a red light that says “power” or “AC”. This light should always be lit when your system is properly powered by your properties electrical power. If this light is not lit your system will switch over to its back-up battery power supply. The red “power” or “AC” light will not be lit but the system will still operate.

BATTERY BACK-UP: Your alarm system battery back-up is located inside the locked metal control box. This battery will power your system from 1 to 3 days depending on how much equipment is on the alarm system and how much the alarm is used during the outage. The battery back-up is rechargeable and will recharge once the power is restored to the property. During this recharging you may notice a flashing “Power” or “AC” light. This means the battery is not fully charged. This flashing “Power” or “AC” light will stop over the next few days as the battery charges.

POWER FAILURE ALERT: When your power first goes out the alarm system will begin beeping the alarm keypad after about 10 minutes. This initial power loss alert is designed to bring your attention to the alarm and its loss of power. Entering your alarm code will silence the beeping.

If you experience:

1. Your alarm keypad beeping and the red “Power” or “A/C” light is not lit.
2. Your property is not experiencing a power outage.

What to do:

1. Check your power breaker or fuse box for tripped breakers or blown fuses. All active circuit breakers should be flipped to the center and tight. If a breaker feels loose flip it out and back to the center. If this did not help go to step 2.
2. Locate the alarm power transformer. This is a somewhat large (3”x 2 1/2”) transformer plug, plugged into the lower half of an electrical outlet on your property. It is usually white or beige in color and warm to the touch, usually screwed into the receptacle to prevent removal. Plug a lamp or hair dryer into the top part of this receptacle to insure the outlet has power. If the receptacle does not have power you will need to call an electrician to restore power to that receptacle. If you have ground fault receptacles (this is the receptacles that have the buttons test and reset on them, usually found in bathrooms,

laundry rooms, garages, attics, and crawl spaces) you need to check to insure these have not tripped and need to be reset. Sometimes one ground fault receptacle controls power to several outlets.

OPERATING THE ALARM DURING AN OUTAGE: When you arm or disarm your alarm system during a power outage the keypad will begin a rapid beeping, just enter your code again. Your alarm system will remain armed/disarmed but the beeping will silence. This step will need to be repeated as long as the power is out each time you arm or disarm the alarm.

LONG TERM POWER OUTAGE: If your alarm goes without power for more than a couple of days the system battery will get low and the system may become non-responsive. This means the keypad may begin to beep continuously even after entering your code. At this point the alarm is so low on its battery back-up that the system will not respond to your keypad commands. Although this is a rare occurrence there is little that you can do but allow the battery to run dead. Some customers who are handy have removed the alarm keypads and disconnected the red wire from the back of the keypad, while others keep pushing buttons until the alarm dies. When the alarm system reaches this point there is not much that can be done. Without proper power to the system neither our operators or service techs can assist you.

SERVICE LIGHT: Once power is restored to your property you may notice a service light (this light is not seen on older systems, if you do not have a service light disregard this section). This light means your system has failed one or more of the dozens of self test the system is continually performing. To determine what service condition you have follow these steps. We have listed the 3 most common service conditions.

With the service light is lit, from your alarm keypad press * 2. The system will enter service mode. Look at the zones lights that are lit. Use the guide below to solve your service problem.

If zone 6 is lit solid: This means your system has detected a loss of phone service. Check your phone lines and make sure all phone lines are working. If your phones are not working contact your phone company. Once your phone service is restored, arm and disarm your alarm to clear this service light.

If zone 7 is lit solid: This means your alarm has failed to communicate with our monitoring center. This is common if your alarm was activated during a phone outage. Your alarm attempted to contact our monitoring and failed to do so because of the phone outage.

To clear this service condition you will need to:

1. call our office and place your account on test.
2. Then arm your alarm system, allow the delays to completely expire and open a door allow the siren to run for 30 seconds before entering your code.

Once the alarm sends a signal into our monitoring center this light will clear. If code 6 and 7 are lit, 7 can not be cleared until 6 is cleared first, i.e. your phone service is working properly.

If zone 8 is lit solid: This means your alarm has lost time on its internal clock. This service condition does not affect normal operation of your alarm. To reset your alarm systems internal clock: Press *98 on the alarm keypad. This will cause your alarm system to call our programming computer for a time update and the light should clear in 5 minutes. If the light does not clear within 5 minutes call our office for service. If service code 6 and 8 are lit 8 can not be cleared until 6 is cleared, i.e. your phone service is working properly.

Important things to remember!

1. **Not every thing that beeps is related to the alarm system.** During a power outage many things can beep including cordless phones, kid's toys, low battery cell phones and pagers, refrigerators and other appliances, clocks, etc. One such device is hardwired smoke detectors not related to your alarm system. These smoke detectors were installed by your builder and are powered by your house power. When the power is out these smoke detectors have a back-up 9volt battery. When the power is out and the battery is running low these builder installed smoke detectors, they will beep. These smokes are not related to the alarm system installed by Carolina Security & Wiring. The best way to help you determine this is to remember our smoke detectors do not have a sounder in the actual detector. The only beeping generated from the alarm system is from the keypads used to arm and disarm the alarm or the loud siren. Please locate the source of your beeping prior to calling for service.
2. Purchase a generator. Gas generators are becoming more popular. If your budget allows, purchase a generator. This will allow you to have some minimum power until full power can be restored.
3. Have an emergency kit ready. Keep a flash light with fresh batteries and extra batteries on hand. A battery powered radio and cell phone. Use the cell phone for limited periods and keep the phone off when not needed. In case your power is out for a week or more.
4. Burglars take advantage of power outages. During wide spread power outages we experience an increase in alarm activations and burglaries. Keep a watch out for suspicious activity.