

HOUSEHOLD BATTERIES

Many household systems utilize batteries either as the primary power source or as a back up in case of a power outage. These batteries need to be replaced from time to time and the following information lists those that the Emergencies Preparedness Committee is aware of in our community.

SMOKE DETECTORS

a) Hard wired smoke detectors:

These are the smoke detectors installed by Toll Bros. in all homes in Regency at Providence. The primary power source is from the home's electrical supply and the battery is only required in the event of a power outage. The demand on the battery is therefore small and they should last probably about five years. When they need replacing they will give an audible "chirping" signal.

These detectors take a common, flat, rectangular 9v battery which is accessed through a small door on the side of the detector. However, it is difficult to align the battery when working close to the ceiling on step ladders. Perhaps an easier way is to remove the detector completely from the ceiling by rotating the device in a counter clockwise direction and then unplugging the electrical supply. The battery can then be replaced at ground level. It is a good idea to use an indelible marker to mark the positive and negative terminals on the battery chamber for future replacements, if like me your eyesight is not what it used to be.

Replace the detector on the ceiling by reversing the removal procedure. The plug for the electrical supply will only connect one way so there is no risk of reversing the connection.

Many hard wired smoke detectors installed in Regency at Providence are not connected to the home security system and are NOT monitored by the security company. They give an audible warning only. Apparently the contract with the security company of some home owners indicates that their hard wired detectors are in fact monitored. If uncertain as to the status of your detectors, contact your security company at:

Westminster Security	610-874-2800
(serviced by Connective Home)	
ADT	800-662-5378

b) Wireless smoke detectors:

i) Monitored detectors:

Some homes in the community have had additional smoke detectors installed by the security company which are linked to the security system by a wireless transmitter. These are not hard wired and the sole power supply is the battery.

These smoke detectors ARE monitored by the security company.

These monitored detectors take a small cylindrical 3v battery type CR 123. Again, the easiest way to replace the battery is to remove the device from the ceiling by rotation in a counter clockwise direction. These detectors are quite new in the community and we do not have any experience as to the life of the battery. To our knowledge none have required replacement to date.

WARNING: when you come to remove this type of detector to change the battery, call the security company and let them know what you are doing. Otherwise they will get an alarm signal and you may find the Fire Department on your doorstep. The security company will take you off line for an hour to effect the replacements.

ii) Non monitored detectors

Smoke detectors that are retro fitted to houses such as those you would buy at the hardware store are battery powered only. These also take a regular 9v battery and it is recommended that these are replaced annually. One suggestion is to replace them either in the spring or the fall when you change the clock.

VERIZON FIOS TELEPHONE SERVICE

The Verizon FIOS service utilizes a battery backup unit (BBU) in case of a power outage or in the event that the "Power Supply Unit" is accidentally unplugged. This will provide approximately eight hours of backup power for standard voice service. The BBU is located in the basement close to the main electrical breaker panel and has a panel of six indicator lights which display the systems status. These tell you whether your service is being powered by the home's electrical supply or by the battery. The BBU also indicated when the battery needs to be replaced.

The panel indicator lights are labeled as follows:

Battery Emergency Use	Alarm Silence	Auxiliary Power	Replace Battery	Battery Power	System Status
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When the system is functioning normally only the green "System Status" light will be lit. When the battery needs replacing the "Replace Battery" light will come on. This panel should be checked on a regular basis, probably once a week to ensure that the battery does not need replacing. The instructions for replacing the battery are shown at the bottom of the FIOS box below the indicator panel.

The FIOS back-up power supply is a 12v, 7.5 ampere hour sealed lead-acid battery and is available from a number of suppliers including Amazon.com. Other suppliers can be found on the web by searching for "Verizon FIOS backup batteries".

Verizon's own batteries are under warranty for one year. If you need to replace your battery and it is under warranty, call Verizon at 1-888-553-1555 to get a replacement at

no charge. If the battery is out of warranty and you do not have a protection plan you can purchase one over the phone from Verizon at 1-877-503-3537.

COMCAST (XFINITY) TELEPHONE SERVICE

The Comcast digital voice modem normally draws power from the household electricity supply. In the event that there is a power outage, battery backup is available for your Xfinity voice service.

Check your modem to see if it came with a battery pre-installed. Your modem may have two battery slots but Xfinity advises that you still only need one backup battery. If your modem did not come with a battery pre-installed, call Xfinity at 1-800-XFINITY and they will send you one, free of charge.

The backup battery will provide approximately 5 hours of voice service. If you do not have a battery or if the battery is faulty, there will be no voice service during a power outage.

To check the status of your battery:

- If the battery light is solid, your battery has charge
- If the battery light is out, make sure the battery is properly connected.
- If the battery light is flashing, you may need to replace the battery.

For technical assistance or to obtain a new battery, call 1-800-XFINITY.

“HEATILATOR” GAS LOG FIRES

Should a power outage occur, the home will be without central heating unless you have a standby generator. In that event those homes with gas log fires have a useful backup source of heat, at least for the living area.

“Heatilator” gas fires installed in Regency at Providence appear to utilize the “Intellifire Pilot Ignition System (IPI) which operates on a 3volt supply provided by the household electricity supply and an installed transformer. In the event of a power outage, gas fires using the IPI system have provision for battery backup using two “D” cell batteries. To install the batteries remove the bottom grille on the fire to access the controls and the gas on/off valve. There should be a small cradle attached to two wires that will accommodate two “D” cell batteries. These will provide the necessary power to light the fire in the event of a power outage. The batteries should not be stored in the cradle when the power supply is normal. Keep the batteries on hand separately and be sure to see that they do not exceed the recommended shelf life.

Consult the Owner’s manual for more details. Note that the Manual states that the 3v transformer should be unplugged when batteries are being used. However, a Heatolator dealer claimed that this was not necessary when there was a power outage and that the batteries could be removed after the power was restored, provided they were not left in place for more that a few hours.

Remember to keep a flashlight handy in case the batteries have to be replaced in darkness.

Some older Heatolator fires use the Standing Pilot Ignition system (SPI). This operates off a continually burning pilot light and will function during a power outage provided the pilot light has previously been ignited. If the pilot light is ignited by a piezo electric system it can be lit even during a power outage. To determine if you have an SPI ignition system, remove the lower grill and look for a red button which is the pilot light igniter. There will also be an on/off control for the pilot light.

BATTERY POWERED BACKUP SUMP PUMPS

This subject has already been covered in detail in a separate bulletin but a brief comment will be made here for the sake of completion.

Battery operated sump pumps are recommended to have a deep discharge marine battery size 27 or larger. The more ampere hours the better. Automobile batteries are not considered suitable for this use.

If the battery is not the sealed type, water levels should be checked regularly following the manufacturers instructions and topped up as necessary. Battery terminals should be inspected and cleaned periodically.

GENERATOR BATTERIES

Standby generators and portable generators with electrical starters all utilize automotive type batteries which need periodic maintenance. Water levels should be checked regularly following the manufacturers instructions and topped up as necessary. Battery terminals should be inspected and cleaned periodically.

Standby generators automatically start up and run usually once a week to keep the battery fully charged. Portable generators with electric starters do not have this capability and it is important therefore to ensure that the battery is adequately charged at all times. Charging stations can be purchased which when connected to the battery will monitor the charge and top up as needed.

GARAGE DOOR OPENERS

a) Remote "Clicker"

The remote "clicker" for the Liftmaster garage door openers is powered by a CR 2032 battery. The battery is accessed by prying open the two halves of the case with a small, flat bladed screwdriver. This can be rather difficult but perseverance wins the day.

b) External Keypad

The external keypad is powered by a common, flat, rectangular 9v battery which is housed in the bottom of the keypad. To remove the cover, press below the notch and slide the cover downwards.

FLASHLIGHTS AND LANTERNS

We are all familiar with the exhortations to keep an emergency flashlight or lantern in the home and I am sure we all have at least one. It is all too easy however to forget to check the batteries so that when you do need light, the batteries have leaked, the contacts corroded and the flashlight is useless.

It is a good idea to keep at least one flashlight in a location you can easily find in the dark with the batteries stored separately in the same location. Of course you then have to be able to assemble the thing in the dark!

Safety and Security Committee, September 2012.

Disclaimer: As with all advice/recommendations, we are presenting the best current information we can on a given subject. We believe the information is current and accurate as of the day it was posted to the RAP website. However, you should always consult experts, whether in health care or other fields, to ask specific additional questions you may have regarding how this information affects you personally.