



What's Happening?

The UK home phone (landline) service is getting an upgrade. Soon, most landline calls will be made over a broadband line. A few simple steps will help you stay connected, especially during a power cut.

Unlike traditional phone lines, digital landlines won't function without power.

Some households may have other devices connected to the phone line (burglar alarms, telecare devices, etc).

You need to think about how you'll stay connected during a power cut. In most cases, a mobile phone is enough, but some critical devices will require a backup.

Checklist

- ☐ If you are a vulnerable customer (such as a telecare user), let your phone company know.
- ☐ Make a note of what connected devices use the landline.
- ☐ Plan how you'll make calls and use essential equipment in the event of a power cut. If you can, have a mobile phone handy as a backup option.
- ☐ Speak to your device provider or manufacturer to check the compatibility of your connected devices with a digital landline.
- ☐ Contact the connected devices manufacturers for guidance.

Power-loss Preparedness

In the event of a power outage, digital landlines won't function until power is restored. We strongly recommend you have a mobile phone available for emergencies.

If you depend on your landline, your provider must make sure you can contact the emergency services during a power cut. If you don't have a working mobile phone or a reliable mobile signal, your landline provider must offer you, for free, a back-up solution such as a battery back-up unit for your home. This back-up must last for at least one hour in a power cut, but some providers have back-ups that last up to seven hours.

Your phone company won't know which devices you have connected to their network. It's essential you audit the devices yourself and identify what requires back-up power.

Vulnerable Customers

Vulnerable customers (such as telecare users) must inform the phone company about their situation and needs. If you know someone who relies on their landline, advise them to talk to their phone company and social care provider.

If you depend on your landline, have additional needs, or can't use a mobile, your phone company may offer a free solution such as a battery back-up unit that lets you contact emergency services during a power cut.

What You Need To Do

- Speak to your provider to find out if you are affected by the switchover to digital landlines
- Tell your provider if:
 - You have a care alarm, health pendant, security alarm, or other connected device;
 - You have a disability or any other needs that mean you need extra help or support;
 - You don't own a mobile phone, or your mobile phone is of no use in a power outage situation.
- Beware of scams - If you receive any communication requesting payment or claiming urgent action is needed, verify its authenticity by contacting your telephone company directly using the number provided on your bill.

If you already have broadband, the switchover could be as simple as unplugging your phone line from the wall-mounted socket and plugging it into the back of your broadband router.

If you don't have access to broadband you don't need to worry. Phone companies are working on solutions to keep all customers connected.

More Information

More information on the digital switchover is available from Ofcom, the telecoms regulator, on a dedicated webpage which can be found by clicking this link: www.ofcom.org.uk/future-of-landline-calls, or scanning the QR Code.



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