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## **Ask the Electrician: How do I prepare my commercial building for a disaster?**

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New England's notorious weather – from fierce winter storms to summer squalls and fall hurricanes – can leave businesses in the dark. While power outages are often blamed on storms, they can also

be caused by unforeseen events like accidents or construction mishaps. While it's impossible to prevent disasters and power outages entirely, proactive preparation can significantly minimize their impact on your commercial building.

Here are essential tips to help you safeguard your business against power outages from a disaster:

**Understand Your Building's Power Consumption:** A fundamental aspect of power outage preparedness is knowing your building's energy usage. This knowledge is crucial for selecting the appropriate generator size. Review your utility bills to estimate your average power consumption.

**Plan for Backup Power:** Generators are essential during extended outages. Due to high demand during the winter season, it's advisable to reserve a generator in advance. Identify critical systems requiring power, such as refrigeration, HVAC, or essential equipment, to determine the necessary generator capacity for your facility. Look into installing a generator tap box or docking station that will allow you to quickly and safely connect a temporary portable generator.

**Prioritize Essential Systems:** Not all power-dependent systems are equal. Create a list of critical functions that must operate during an outage. These might include, HVAC, refrigeration, security systems, communications systems, and medical equipment. This prioritization will guide your power restoration efforts and generator allocation.

**Regular Electrical System Maintenance:** Routine inspections of your electrical equipment by certified professionals are vital for maintaining safety and reliability. These inspections help identify potential issues and ensure your electrical system is ready to handle unexpected challenges. Comprehensive records of your electrical system can expedite power restoration efforts in case of an outage. Interstate maintains detailed records of every jobsite and building for future reference.

By following these guidelines, you can enhance your commercial building's resilience to power outages. A well-prepared facility can minimize disruptions, protect assets, and ensure business continuity during a disaster.

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