DO THE CHEAP AND EASY THINGS FIRST.
1. Check that load-shedding schedule to plan your electricity usage. Buy a small gas cooker if you don't already cook with gas.
2. Make sure that your fridge, your refrigerator and your freezer have sufficient battery life.
3. Buy rechargeable batteries for your appliances that will keep the power going.
4. Use rechargeable batteries for your electronics, like your cellphone and laptop.

BATTERY

- A laptop uses 65W while charging
- One energy-efficient fridge / freezer on, managed well, will consume 100W - 200W
- A TV and a decoder uses 30W when off and 150W when in use
- A cell phone charger uses 0.5W not charging and 6W when charging

Load-shedding can last for between two and four hours at a time. Therefore, an ideal battery system capacity of five hours should be sufficient.

A battery backed-up system consists of the following components:

BATTERY CHARGER
Charges the rechargeable batteries from the DC-motor power while there is no load-shedding.
INVERTER
Converts the DC battery power into usable AC power during load-shedding. It is an essential component. Grid-tied inverters require the battery system to be interconnected with the wiring of your house, so that it can be declared a grid-tied system (usually in conjunction with PV). Use an approved inverter.

The size of the battery system will depend on the equipment to be powered during load-shedding.

In the long term, it is better to invest in battery back-up or solar and battery back-up, rather than investing in a generator.

BATTERY

- Visit switchandsave.co.za for tips on how to become energy efficient and information on solar PV.

SOLAR PV AND BATTERY

- All grid-connected solar PV systems need to be authorised by your municipality prior to installation. Without approval, no installation or municipal permits will be given. Most municipalities in the province allow grid-connected systems and you can contact them directly.
- Off-grid systems must also be registered and declared so that it can be verified that they are not mistaken for grid-tied systems. For the City of Cape Town visit www.capetown.gov.za/solarPV and those working on the grid. Most municipalities in the province allow grid-connected systems and you can contact them directly.

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