

EDITORIAL: Are you prepared?

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So, how long was your power out? That has been the opening line this week in many a conversation among friends and family across the North Shore and throughout Metro Vancouver.

The ferocious windstorm that whacked the region Saturday blew down trees, closed roads and knocked out power to hundreds of thousands of people. And that is good news.

Consider #bcstorm a practice run for the Big One, about which we've all been warned for years — and for which many of us have failed to prepare.

Rather than a full-on spurned-lover slap in the face, the windstorm was a gentle pat on the cheek reminding us to wake the heck up and get ourselves, our families and our homes prepared in case a real disaster happens — and not being able to watch TV or charge your iPhone for a day are not disasters.

Consider this: Some North Shore residents were without power for just a few hours, others for 30 hours and, as a result, fast-food restaurants and grocery stores were overrun with customers, the latter even running out of ice as people sought to keep food from spoiling. In the case of a major earthquake, we've all been warned we'll need to be self-sufficient for 72 hours — that means we need to be able to secure our homes and keep ourselves safe, warm, fed and hydrated without looking to authorities or other outside sources for help.

How many of us were able to do that even for six hours on the weekend? That's why the storm was good news. Most of us escaped unscathed with a greater understanding of what we'll need in a real emergency, and now we have time to take the necessary steps.

Not sure what to do? There are tips at getprepared.gc.ca.

So, you know, get prepared.

And one more thing: A big thank-you to the BC Hydro crews, emergency responders and municipal workers who put in plenty of time dealing with the aftermath of the storm.

What are your thoughts? Send us a letter via email by clicking [here \(http://www.nsnews.com/opinion/send-us-a-letter\)](http://www.nsnews.com/opinion/send-us-a-letter) or post a comment below.

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