

MONSOON SEASON IS YOUR COMPUTER READY?

Monsoon season is upon us, and for your computer this is a dangerous time. Your computer needs electricity the way that the human body needs blood. It courses through every single piece of hardware. Without it, your computer can do nothing. However, just like an individual's blood pressure, sudden drops and surges in electricity

can cause severe and harmful damage to your computers "heart" (hard drive), vital organs (internal hardware) or even its "brain" (central processor). The following precautions will help you keep your computer "healthy":

BACKUPS: The most important precaution against *any* risk of data loss is a full, up-to-date backup. Tape backups, Zip drives and rewritable CD ROM Drives are all excellent, inexpensive backup devices. Backups will preserve your data in the event of system "crashes" due to electrical spikes, blackouts, water damage, etc. Make sure to keep a copy of your backup in a safe (off site) location, such as a safe deposit box. Backup often.

SURGE PROTECTOR MYTH: Most likely, you have a power strip/surge protector on your system. All components plug into this strip. It is a common myth that these small strips will protect your system from serious electrical damage. "Surge protectors" provide only *limited* protection for your system against electrical "noise". You've spent several thousand dollars on your computer. Are you going to trust a \$10 power strip to keep it safe?



A single power outage is not as damaging to your computer as the extreme surges and drops that occur during a blackout, brownout, or just your ordinary lightning storm.

TELEPHONE LINE DANGER: One potential threat to your computer which most often goes unnoticed is your modem connection. Surges and power fluctuations can hit your system through your phone line and cause serious damage. Make sure you have telephone line protection. The best phone line protection (besides disconnecting your modem) is through a battery backup.

BATTERY BACKUPS: A single power outage is not as damaging to your computer as the extreme surges and drops in power that occur during a blackout, brownout, or just your ordinary lightning storm. Your computer is very sensitive to power fluctuations - protect yourself against this. Uninterrupted Power Supplies (UPS) are available at most any computer store or office supply store. Don't plug your monitor or printer through these backups - they add extra drain to the battery.

WHICH BACKUP IS BEST? There are many different battery backup (UPS) devices on the market today. While they all serve the same purpose, the price for such a backup can be as low as \$80.00 to several hundred dollars. Which is right for you? Read our report on page two and find out how (and where) to buy the "perfect" backup for your needs.

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POWER TO SAVE

Battery Backup Review

Battery Backups or Uninterrupted Power Supplies (UPS) can be bought at any computer or office supply store. Their prices range from \$80.00 to several hundred dollars. Which one is right for you? A few simple facts (and my personal recommendation) will save you time and money.

Step 1: Terminology

Battery Backup performance rating and functionality is based on several factors. In order to evaluate these factors, you must first know the terminology:

VA Rating:

The VA rating is a mathematical formula used to tell you how much drain the battery backup can handle.

“VA” stands for “Volts” multiplied by “Amps”. The rating tells you how many gadgets you can safely connect to the battery backup.

Runtime:

Runtime is simply the number of minutes that the battery will stay on after the power goes off. Usually, runtime will be shown as a range of time, based on the level of drain (VA) on the battery.

Step 2: How Much Is Enough?

First things first - equipment such as monitors, printers, scanners, etc should **not** be plugged into the battery backup unless they are very expensive pieces. These “peripheral” components are a very heavy drain on the battery and will greatly reduce your ‘runtime’.

The computer system (the “Box”), modem and network cables should all run through the backup and a good battery backup will handle all of these.

The higher quality battery backups will have extra “surge protected” plugs for your other peripherals.

Generally speaking, the new Pentium systems should have at least a 300VA rating, with a runtime of 10-15 minutes.

Step 3: My Recommendation:

Year after year, my battery backup of choice is the “**Blackout Buster**” made by PK Electronics.

The Blackout Buster is loaded with great features, including a 500VA rating, internet/network line protection, and excellent voltage regulation against common “brownout” damage.

Additionally, the Blackout Buster has 3 extra plugs that give surge protection without draining your battery. One battery plug is at the top of the box so large “transformer” type plugs will fit easily. Installation time is about 5 minutes - no tools needed.

The best feature is its price. Normally, you can get the Blackout Buster for under \$100.00 at **Staples** office supply stores or **Fryes Electronics**.