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Protecting your electronic equipment

Small businesses with networks should get surge protectors that offer protection from surges through network cables.

Check protection devices regularly. At least once a year, you should inspect your power protection devices to ensure they are functioning properly. Most good ones will have a signaling light to tell you when they are protecting your equipment properly.

Use dedicated circuits if possible. Put the computer on its own power circuit, so it isn't sharing the power with your air conditioner, space heater or vacuum cleaner. This greatly improves the power quality and insulates the PC from power sags when these devices are turned on.

Turn off and disconnect the power cord during an electrical storm. This is a simple precaution that protects your system from possible problems during a thunderstorm.

Turn off power during a blackout. If you lose power, when the power comes back on, the signal can initially be inconsistent, which can make things more difficult for your power supply.

High voltages can enter your computer through the phone line connected to the modem. To protect your computer during electrical storms, unplug the telephone line from the modem jack or use a telephone line surge suppressor.

Businesses with network servers should invest in some form of UPS, which uses batteries to keep servers running during power outages.

Summer heat also can be a significant problem. Keep your computer in a cool, dry area to prevent overheating.