



The Power Is Out!

Most households will face a power outage at some time from high winds, snow, ice or falling trees. This can create problems for food safety.

Below are tips to help you prepare for, or deal with food during a power outage.

Food Safety During An Emergency

BE PREPARED!

- Make sure your freezer is normally kept at 0°F (-18°C) and your fridge at 40°F (4°C).
- Have one or more coolers on hand with gel packs or ice frozen in your freezer.
- Keep a supply of shelf-stable foods,
 - * Ready-to-eat canned foods
 - * powdered milk
 - * High-energy foods such as peanut butter, trail mix, nuts
 - * baby formula

These can be eaten cold or heated on a BBQ or open fire.

- A digital thermometer would help you to quickly check the internal temperatures for safety.
- Keep an emergency water supply as water systems can be affected by power outages.



WHAT TO DO!

As long as the power is off, leave your fridge and freezer **door closed** as much as possible.

- * fridge will keep foods cold enough for 4-6 hours
- * a half full freezer will keep foods cold enough for up to 24 hours
- * a full freezer will keep foods cold enough for 48 hours.

Covering the freezer with blankets or quilts will help keep it cold.

Adding bags of ice to the fridge or freezer will help keep it cold.

Check the guide on the back to help you decide what is safe and what should be discarded.

How to Get Rid of Odors From Fridges and Freezers!

When food spoils, odors are difficult to remove. The following may help, but may have to be repeated several times:

- Dispose of spoiled food.
- Wash entire fridge/freezer with hot water and detergent, including shelves, crispers, door, gasket and ice trays.
- Rinse with a sanitizing solution (see back of page).
- Leave door open for about 15 minutes.

If odor remains, the fridge or freezer may need to be discarded in a safe manner!

If odor remains, try any or all of the following:

- Wipe with equal parts vinegar and water.
- Leave the door open, allowing air to circulate for several days.
- Stuff with rolled newspapers, close door for several days. Remove papers and clean with vinegar and water.
- Sprinkle coffee grounds or baking soda loosely in a large shallow container in the bottom
- Place a cotton swab soaked with vanilla inside, close the door for 24 hours.

What Should Be Discarded?



Foods in the Fridge

Discard any perishable foods that may have been above **40°F (4°C)** for more than 2 hours and any food that feels warm or has an unusual odor or color.

The following are often implicated with foodborne illness and should be discarded if stored above **40°F (4°C)** for 2 hours or more:

- Raw or cooked meat, poultry, seafood and luncheon meats
- Casseroles, stews or soups
- Milk and soft cheeses
- Homemade mayonnaise or dressings
- Cooked pasta, potatoes or rice
- Salads made with any of the above foods



Foods that can be stored above **40°F (4°C)** for several days include:

- Butter and margarine
- Hard or processed cheese
- Fresh fruits and vegetables
- Mustard, ketchup pickles
- Salad dressings, peanut butter, barbeque sauce
- Jams and jellies

Foods in the Freezer

Foods may partially or completely thaw before power can be restored. The following will help you decide what to keep and what to discard.

- Foods that contain ice crystals or still feels cold as if refrigerated (**40°F (4°C)**), may be refrozen.
 - meat
 - dairy
 - poultry
 - cheese
 - seafood
 - fruits
 - vegetables
 - juices
 - breads
 - pastries, cake, pies
 - casseroles, stews, soups
- Frozen dinners, desserts, yogurt and ice cream should not be re-frozen.
- Discard the following foods that have thawed and been held above **40°F (4°C)** for over 2 hours:
 - meat
 - dairy
 - poultry
 - fruits
 - casseroles, stews, soups
 - pastries, pies, cake
 - vegetables
 - cheese
 - juices



Sanitizing Solution

1 tablespoon of unscented, liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of water.

Source:

- A Consumer's Guide to Food Safety, U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service, 2007
- Food Safety After a Power Outage, Nova Scotia Agriculture Food Protection and Enforcement Division,
- Food Safety: Keeping Food Safe During a Power Failure, Ontario
- Food Safety During a Power Outage, Perth District Health Unit

