



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ADVISORY BULLETIN



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Power Outages: Key Tips for Consumers about food Safety



The safety of food may be a problem following any storm where electricity has been interrupted for an extended period of time. The following information is intended to help you judge the safety of your food after a power outage.

Be Prepared:

- Have a refrigerator thermometer.
- Know where you can get dry ice.
- Keep on hand a few days worth of ready-to-eat foods that do not require cooking or cooling, which depend on electricity.

When the Power Goes Out:

- Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible.
- The refrigerator will keep food cold for about 4 hours if it is unopened.
- Refrigerators should be kept at 40° F or below for proper food storage.

Once the Power is Restored:

- Check the temperature inside of your refrigerator and freezer.
- If an appliance thermometer was kept in the freezer, check the temperature when the power comes back on. If the freezer thermometer reads 40° F or below, the food is safe and may be refrozen.
- If a thermometer has not been kept in the freezer, check each package of food to determine its safety. You can't rely on appearance or odor. If the food still contains ice crystals or is 40° F or below, it is safe to refreeze or cook.
- Refrigerated food should be safe as long as the power was out for no more than 4 hours. Keep the door closed as much as possible.
- Discard any perishable food (such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs or leftovers) that has been above 40° F for two hours or more.

Excerpt from FDA website