

Power Outage

FOOD SAFETY

DO THIS FIRST!

1. Close the facility. It is not safe to operate without lights, refrigeration, ventilation or hot water.
2. Write down the time when the power outage occurred. Your food safety "time clock" starts ticking when the power goes out.
3. Begin taking regular food temperature readings. Have a food thermometer ready at all times. Check hot foods every hour and cold foods every two hours. Keep a time/temperature record for every item checked in every unit.

FOOD SAFETY FACTORS

Watch for these four conditions carefully:

1. Foods being cooked when power went off.
 - Do not serve any partially cooked food.
 - If power outage is brief (less than one hour), re-cook food to 165°F when power returns.
 - If power is out for more than one hour, discard all partially cooked food.
2. Food being held hot (at 135°F or above in a warmer)
 - If food is below 135°F for more than four hours, discard it.
 - If food is below 135°F for less than four hours, rapidly reheat it to 165°F on the stove or in the oven before serving it.
3. Food being held cold (at 41°F or below in a refrigerator)
 - Write down the time when the food rises to above 41°F.
 - If food cannot be re-chilled to 41°F within four hours, discard it.
4. Frozen foods that thaw out.
 - If thawed food does not exceed 41°F for more than four hours, it may be refrozen.

ROAD TO RECOVERY

After the power comes back on:

1. Decide which foods to discard and which to save. Use time/temperature records and food safety factors described here.
2. Verify electrical breakers, utilities and all equipment are in working order.
3. Make sure hot water is being heated adequately for hand and ware washing.
4. Clean and sanitize food equipment and utensils as needed.
5. Call your local public health department before reopening.

READY TO REOPEN?

You are ready to reopen only after you make sure the food you are serving is safe!

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FOOD SAFETY

READY TO REOPEN? *(continued)*

Potentially Hazardous Foods

Foods to be most concerned about during a power outage include various egg, milk and meat products, cut melons and other perishables. Harmful microorganisms can grow in these foods and cause illnesses when between 41°F and 135°F.

- Meat and meat dishes
- Mixed dishes (soups, stews, casseroles, pasta, rice)
- Dairy and egg products (milk, eggs, cream sauces, soft cheeses)
- Cut melons (cut watermelons, honeydew)
- Cooked vegetables (cooked peas)
- Some desserts (pumpkin pie, custard-filled pastries, cheesecake, meringue, chiffon)

Non-potentially Hazardous Foods

These foods may be kept at room temperature. Harmful microorganisms usually do not grow on these foods and do not cause illnesses. Discard these foods if quality deteriorates or mold grows on them.

- Breads, dry flour, dry pasta, dry rice, sugar
- Vinegar-based dressings, ketchup, relish, mustard, condiments
- High-sugar foods (jellies, fruit pies, dried fruit, juices)
- Whole fresh fruits and vegetables

Keeping Cold Food Cold Longer

A closed refrigerator can keep food cold for up to four hours. A closed freezer can keep food cold for up to two days. Follow these tips to keep cold foods cold longer:

- Keep the refrigerator door closed, except while checking food temperatures every two hours.
- Cover open coolers with tarps or blankets.
- Avoid adding hot foods to refrigerators.
- Group chilled foods together to reduce warming.

HELPFUL HINTS

Reduce the impact of a power outage by:

- Canceling incoming food supply shipments.
- Transferring food to off-site cold storage facilities.
- Placing dry ice blocks in refrigerators/freezers. A 25-pound block of dry ice can keep a 10-cubic-foot freezer cold for up to four days. (NOTE: Dry ice produces carbon dioxide gas that should be ventilated.)

For more information, contact the Springfield-Greene County Health Department at 417-864-1424.