



Food Safety Guidelines for Retail Establishments Before, During and After A Power Outage and Flooding

BEFORE

PLAN AHEAD (IF YOU CAN)

1. Put **appliance thermometers** in your refrigerator and freezer. Keep freezer 0°F or below and refrigerator at 40°F or below.
2. Freeze **containers of water and gel packs** to help keep food cold if the power goes out.
3. Group foods together in the freezer to help food stay colder longer.
4. Freeze refrigerated items such as milk, and fresh meat and poultry that you do not need immediately.
5. Store all open, nonperishable foods in air-tight containers along with other unopened nonperishable foods and all food service wares and utensils on higher shelves to avoid flood or storm water

* If you think power will be out for an extended period of time, buy **dry or block ice** to keep the fridge or freezer cold. Be sure that the water from melting ice doesn't contaminate foods.

DURING

WHILE THE POWER IS OUT

COLD FOODS:

KEEP THE REFRIGERATOR/FREEZER DOORS CLOSED TO MAINTAIN COLD TEMPERATURE! IF DOORS STAY CLOSED:

1. A **full freezer** will hold its temperature for **48 HOURS; 24 HOURS IF HALF-FULL**
2. A fridge will keep food safe for **4 hours**

HOT FOODS:

- ◆ Document temperature of the food and the time the power outage began.
- ◆ Discard any foods in the process of being cooked that had not reached their appropriate final cooking temperature when the outage occurred.
- ◆ Cover hot food display cases with thermal blankets or lids to reduce temperature loss.
- ◆ Foods cooked just before the outage must be served immediately or kept in the covered hot food display

DO NOT PREPARE FOOD during the power outage!

AFTER

ONCE THE POWER IS BACK ON...

The steps you take after a power outage will vary, depending on the length of time your facility was without power and how effectively you were able to keep your food out of the temperature danger zone. **Table 1** will help you decide how to handle refrigerated potentially hazardous foods. Table 2 is for potentially hazardous foods held in hot cases.

◆ WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!

Check the temperature inside of your refrigerator and freezer. If they are still at safe temperatures, your food should be fine.

Never taste food to determine its safety.



Table 1—Refrigerated Potentially Hazardous Foods (PHF)

Duration of Outage (hours)	Temperature of Food When Power Returns		
	41°F or below	42°F to 49°F	50°F or above
0-2	PHF can be sold	Cool PHF to 41°F or below within 2 hours	DISCARD
2-3		Cool PHF to 41°F or below within 1 hour	
4+		DISCARD	

Table 2— Hot Held Potentially Hazardous Foods (PHF)

Duration of Outage (hours)	Temperature of Food When Power Returns	
	135°F or above	134°F or below
0-2	PHF can be sold	1. May be sold if reheated to 165°F and then held at 135°F or above; or 2. May be sold as refrigerated food if rapidly cooled to 41°F or below within 2 hours following the restoration of power
2+		DISCARD

AFTER A FLOOD

- × **DO NOT SERVE** any food that may have touched flood or storm water.
- × **DISCARD FOOD** not in waterproof containers; screw –caps, snap lids, pull tops, and crimped tops that are not waterproof.
- × **DISCARD** any damaged cans that have swelling, leakage, punctures, holes, fractures, extensive deep rusting, or crushing/denting severe enough to prevent normal stacking or opening.
- X Remove all labels on undamaged all-metal cans and sanitize its surfaces with one (1) tablespoon bleach in one (1) gallon water. Sanitize with bleach solution all pots, pans, dishes and other food service wares and utensils that have been in contact with flood or storm water.

***Contents of this publication were adapted from the guidelines developed by CDPH and USDA and is brought to you by your local health department.