



**FOOD SAFETY DURING POWER OUTAGES
KEEP IT OR DISCARD IT**

During power outages, food safety is of great concern and should be monitored closely to reduce the occurrence of foodborne illnesses and even death as a result of consuming food not stored at the proper time and temperature to maintain its integrity and overall wholesomeness.

Food storage in a refrigerator:

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recommends that after a power outage, food remains safe for about four hours provided the refrigerator door remains closed as much as possible. It is also recommended that all refrigerated perishables, including leftovers, be discarded if the power is off beyond 4 hrs.

The following are not recommended after four hours of a power outage in a refrigerator:

1. Taste testing food items to determine its safety;
2. Cooking refrigerated perishable foods;
3. Eating any food containing dairy products.

It is important to secure refrigerator and freezer thermometers to monitor the temperature changes during a power outage. Below are two tables with guidelines to use when power goes out under the conditions specified.

#	Product Type	Action taken when held above 40 °F for more than 2 hrs.
Meat, Poultry, Seafood		
1	Raw or leftover cooked meat, poultry, fish, or seafood; soy meat substitutes	Discard
2	Thawing meat or poultry	Discard
3	Salads: Meat, tuna, shrimp, chicken, or egg salad	Discard
4	Gravy, stuffing, broth	Discard
5	Lunchmeats, hot dogs, bacon, sausage, dried beef	Discard
6	Pizza with any topping	Discard
7	Canned hams labeled "Keep Refrigerated"	Discard
8	Canned meats and fish, opened	Discard
9	Casseroles, soups, stews	Discard
Cheese		
1	Soft cheeses: blue/bleu, Roquefort, Brie, Camembert, cottage, cream, Edam, Monterey Jack, ricotta, mozzarella, Muenster, Neufchatel, queso blanco, queso fresco	Discard
2	Hard cheeses: Cheddar, Colby, Swiss, Parmesan, provolone, Romano	Keep
3	Processed cheeses	Keep
4	Shredded cheeses	Discard
5	Low-fat cheeses	Discard
6	Grated Parmesan, Romano, or combination (in can or jar)	Keep
Dairy		
1	Milk, cream, sour cream, buttermilk, evaporated milk, yogurt, eggnog, soy milk	Discard



2	Butter, margarine	Keep
3	Baby formula, opened	Discard
	Eggs	
1	Fresh eggs, hard-cooked in shell, egg dishes, egg products	Discard
2	Custards and puddings, quiche	discard
	Fruits	
1	Fresh fruits, cut	Discard
2	Fresh fruits, uncut	Keep
3	Fruit juices, opened	Keep
4	Canned fruits, opened	Keep
5	Dried fruits, raisins, candied fruits, dates	Keep
6	Sliced or shredded coconut	Discard
	Sauces, Spreads, Jams	
1	Opened mayonnaise, tartar sauce, horseradish	Discard (if above 50 °F for more than 8 hrs)
2	Peanut butter	Keep
3	Jelly, relish, taco sauce, mustard, catsup, olives, pickles	Keep
4	Worcestershire, soy, barbecue, hoisin sauces	Keep
5	Fish sauces, oyster sauce	Discard
6	Opened vinegar-based dressings	Keep
7	Opened creamy-based dressings	Discard
8	Spaghetti sauce, opened	Discard
	Bread, cakes, cookies, pasta, grains	
1	Bread, rolls, cakes, muffins, quick breads, tortillas	Keep
2	Refrigerator biscuits, rolls, cookie dough	Discard
3	Cooked pasta, rice, potatoes	Discard
4	Pasta salads with mayonnaise or vinaigrette	Discard
5	Fresh pasta	Discard
6	Cheesecake	Discard
7	Breakfast foods: waffles, pancakes, bagels	Keep
	Pies and pastry	
1	Cream filled pastries	Discard
2	Pies: custard, cheese-filled, or chiffon; quiche	Discard
3	Fruit pies	Keep
	Vegetables	
1	Fresh vegetables, cut	Discard
2	Fresh vegetables, uncut	Keep
3	Fresh mushrooms, herbs, spices	Keep
4	Greens, pre-cut, pre-washed, packaged	Discard
5	Vegetables, cooked	Discard
6	Tofu, cooked	Discard
7	Vegetable juice, opened	Discard
8	Baked potatoes	Discard
9	Commercial garlic in oil	Discard
10	Potato salad	Discard
11	Casseroles, soups, stews	Discard



Food storage in a freezer:

The USDA also advises that a well packed freezer will maintain a safe temperature for about 48hrs/2dys and 24hrs/1 day for a half filled freezer once the door remains closed. Further, if a food retains ice crystals or is at 40°F or below, although safe, may lose its quality. Taste testing food items to determine its safety or cooking food that was stored at temperatures above 40°F in excess of two hours are not recommended.

#	Food Type	Action taken if ice crystals are present, feels cold as if refrigerated	Action taken if thawed, held above 40 °F for more than 2 hrs.
Meat, poultry, seafood			
1	Meat, poultry, seafood – all types of cuts	Refreeze	Discard
2	stews, soups	Refreeze	Discard
Dairy			
1	Milk	Refreeze (some loss of texture)	Discard
2	Eggs (out of shell) and egg products	Refreeze	Discard
3	Ice cream, frozen yogurt	Discard	Discard
4	Cheese (soft and semi-soft)	Refreeze (some loss of texture)	Discard
5	Hard cheeses	Refreeze	Refreeze
6	Shredded cheeses	Refreeze	Discard
7	Cheesecake	Refreeze	Discard
Fruits			
1	Juices	Refreeze	Refreeze. (discard if mold, yeasty smell, or sliminess develops)
2	Home or commercially packaged	Refreeze (will change texture and flavor)	Refreeze (discard if mold, yeasty smell, or sliminess develops)
Vegetables			
1	Juices	Refreeze	Discard after held above 40°F for 6 hours
2	Home or commercially packaged or blanched	Refreeze (may suffer texture and flavor loss)	Discard after held above 40°F for 6 hours
Breads and pastries			
1	Breads, rolls, muffins, cakes (without custard fillings)	Refreeze	Refreeze
2	Cakes, pies, pastries with custard or cheese filling	Refreeze	Discard
3	Pie crusts, commercial and homemade bread dough	Refreeze (some quality loss may occur)	Refreeze (quality loss is considerable)
Other Foods			
1	Casseroles: pasta, rice-based	Refreeze	Discard
2	Flour, cornmeal, nuts	Refreeze	Refreeze
	Breakfast items: waffles, pancakes, bagels	Refreeze	Refreeze
	Frozen meal, entree, specialty item (pizza, sausage and biscuit, meat pie, convenience foods)	Refreeze	Discard

<https://www.foodsafety.gov/food-safety-charts/food-safety-during-power-outage> - retrieved on September 11, 2019

Note – if power is off for a long period of time, consider placing well wrapped foods in a cooler and fill with ice.