

Fact Sheet

Food Safety

When to Save Food
-and-

When to Throw Food Out!



Section 1: Refrigerated Food and Power Outages

Is food in the refrigerator safe during a power outage? It should be safe as long as power is out **no more than 4 hours**. Keep the door closed as much as possible. Discard any perishable foods (such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and leftovers) that have been above 40 °F for over 2 hours.

Never taste food to determine its safety! You can't rely on appearance or odor to determine whether food is safe. *Note: Always discard any items in the refrigerator that have come into contact with raw meat juices. You will have to evaluate each item separately. Use this chart as a guide.*

FOOD CATEGORIES	SPECIFIC FOODS	HELD ABOVE 40 °F FOR OVER 2 HOURS
MEAT POULTRY SEAFOOD	raw or leftover cooked meat, poultry, fish, or seafood; soy meat substitutes	Discard
	thawing meat or poultry	Discard
	salads: meat, tuna, shrimp, chicken, or egg salad	Discard
	gravy, stuffing, broth, casseroles, soups, stews, pizza	Discard
	lunchmeats, hot dogs, bacon, sausage, dried beef	Discard
	Canned (opened) meats and fish, canned hams labeled "keep refrigerated"	Discard
CHEESE	soft cheeses: blue/bleu, roquefort, brie, camembert, cottage, cream, edam, monterey jack, ricotta, mozzarella, muenster, neufchatel, queso blanco, queso fresco	Discard
	hard cheeses: cheddar, colby, swiss, parmesan, provolone, romano; and processed cheeses, grated parmesan, romano, or combination (can or jar)	Safe
	shredded cheeses and low-fat cheeses	Discard
DAIRY	milk, cream, sour cream, buttermilk, evaporated milk, yogurt, eggnog, soy milk, baby formulas	Discard
	butter, margarine	Safe
EGGS	fresh eggs, hard-cooked in shell, egg dishes, egg products	Discard
	custards and puddings, quiche	Discard
FRUITS	fresh fruits, cut	Discard
	fruit juices and canned fruits (opened); fresh fruits, coconut, raisins, dried & candied fruits, dates	Safe
SAUCES SPREADS JAMS	mayonnaise, tartar sauce, horseradish, fish sauces, oyster sauce (opened)	Discard
	jam, jelly, relish, taco sauce, mustard, catsup, olives, pickles, worcestershire, soy, barbecue, hoisin sauces, peanut butter and opened vinegar-based dressings	Safe
	opened creamy-based dressings and spaghetti sauce	Discard
PIES PASTRY	pastries: cream filled, pies: custard, cheese filled or chiffon, quiche	Discard
	pies, fruit	Safe

FOOD CATEGORIES	SPECIFIC FOODS	HELD ABOVE 40 °F FOR OVER 2 HOURS
BREAD, CAKES PASTA, GRAINS COOKIES	refrigerator biscuits, rolls, cookie dough, cheesecake	Discard
	fresh pasta, cooked pasta, rice, potatoes, pasta salads with mayonnaise or vinaigrette	Discard
VEGETABLES	fresh mushrooms, herbs, spices, vegetables, raw	Safe
	greens, pre-cut, pre-washed, packaged	Discard
	vegetables, cooked; tofu	Discard
	vegetable juice, opened	Discard
	baked potatoes, potato salad, casseroles, soups, stews	Discard
	commercial garlic in oil	Discard

Section 2: Frozen Food and Power Outages

Thawed or partially thawed food in the freezer may be safely refrozen if it still contains ice crystals or is at 40°F or below. Partial thawing and refreezing may affect the **quality** of some food, but the food will be **safe to eat**.

If you keep an appliance thermometer in your freezer, it's easy to tell whether food is safe. When the power comes back on, check the thermometer. If it reads 40 °F or below, the food is safe and can be refrozen.

Never taste food to determine its safety! You can't rely on appearance or odor to determine whether food is safe. *Note: Always discard any items in the freezer that have come into contact with raw meat juices. You will have to evaluate each item separately. Use this chart as a guide.*

FOOD CATEGORIES	SPECIFIC FOODS	CONTAINS ICE CRYSTALS AND STILL FEELS COLD	THAWED AND HELD ABOVE 40 °F OVER 2 HOURS
MEAT POULTRY SEAFOOD	beef, veal, lamb, pork, and ground meats	Refreeze	Discard
	poultry and ground poultry	Refreeze	Discard
	variety meats (liver, kidney, heart, chitterlings)	Refreeze	Discard
	casseroles, stews, soups	Refreeze	Discard
	fish, shellfish, breaded seafood products	Refreeze, but there will be some texture and flavor loss	Discard
DAIRY	milk	Refreeze, may lose texture	Discard
	eggs (out of shell) and egg products	Refreeze	Discard
	ice cream, frozen yogurt	Discard	Discard
	cheese (soft and semi-soft)	Refreeze, may lose texture	Discard
	hard cheeses	Refreeze	Refreeze
	shredded cheeses, cheesecake	Refreeze	Discard
	casseroles containing milk, cream, eggs, soft cheeses	Refreeze	Discard
FRUITIS	juices, home or commercially packaged	Refreeze, will change texture and flavor	Refreeze, but discard if mold, yeasty smell, or sliminess develops

FOOD CATEGORIES	SPECIFIC FOODS	CONTAINS ICE CRYSTALS AND STILL FEELS COLD	THAWED AND HELD ABOVE 40 °F OVER 2 HOURS
VEGETABLES	juices, home or commercially packaged or blanched	Refreeze, may suffer texture and flavor loss.	Discard after held above 40 °F for 6 hours.
BREADS PASTRIES	breads, rolls, muffins, cakes (without custard fillings)	Refreeze	Refreeze
	cakes, pies, pastries with custard or cheese filling	Refreeze	Discard
	pie crusts, commercial and homemade bread dough	Refreeze, some quality loss may occur	Refreeze, quality loss is considerable
OTHER	casseroles – pasta, rice based	Refreeze	Discard
	flour, cornmeal, nuts, waffles, pancakes, bagels	Refreeze	Refreeze
	frozen meal, entree, specialty items (pizza, sausage and biscuit, meat pie, convenience foods)	Refreeze	Discard

Adapted from “Keeping Food Safe during an Emergency” (USDA)

Section 3: Dry Ice Safety

Tips for Dry Ice Handling

- § Know in advance the local sources for dry ice and obtain dry ice as quickly as possible.
- § Handle ice in a well-ventilated area.
- § Wear gloves when handling dry ice, touching dry ice with bare hands can cause burns.
- § Allow two and one half to three pounds of ice per cubic foot of freezer space.
- § Keep freezer doors closed, but do not lock it or cover air vent openings. Gas given off by the dry ice needs a place to escape.
- § Separate the dry ice from the food with a piece of cardboard to protect the food product.
- § Keep refrigeration thermometers in all units in an easy to see area.
- § Remember: A full freezer stays frozen much longer than a partially filled one.



For more sources of information on this topic visit:

ST. CLAIR COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT www.scchealth.co

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT www.michigan.gov/mdard

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION www.cdc.gov

US FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION www.fda.gov

US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE www.usda.gov