Help! The Power Is Out...

Sudden power outages can be frustrating and troublesome, especially when they are prolonged. Perishable foods should not be held above 40 degrees for more than 2 hours. If a power outage is 2 hours or less, you need not be concerned, but how do you save your food when the refrigerator is out for longer times? Being prepared can help. By planning ahead, you can save your perishables.

What if I go to bed and the power is still not on?

Before you go to bed, pack your perishables into your coolers if you haven’t already done so and put in as much ice as you can. Also, when you go to bed, leave a bedroom light switched on. When the power goes back on, it will wake you, so you can check the condition of your foods in the freezer. If freezer foods still have ice crystals, they can be refrozen.

What if the power goes out while I’m at work or out of the house and it has been more than a few hours before I get home?

Try to determine how long the power has been out. Check the internal temperature of the food in your refrigerator with your quick-response thermometer. A liquid such as milk or juice is easy to check. Spot check other items like steaks or leftovers also. If the internal temperature is above 40 degrees, it is best to throw it out. (Check the chart on the back.) If the food in the freezer is not above 40 degrees and there are still ice crystals, you can refreeze.

What if the power goes out and comes back on while I am out?

If your freezer is fairly full and you know it was not longer than 24 hours, the food should be OK. There will be loss of quality with refreezing, but the food will be safe. If the refrigerator was out for more than 2-4 hours, you are best to discard the perishables.

What do I need?

- One or more coolers. Inexpensive styrofoam coolers can do an excellent job as well.

- Ice. Surrounding your food with ice in a cooler will ensure that it will stay cold.

- Shelf-stable foods. Such as canned goods and powdered or boxed milk. These can be eaten cold or heated on the grill.

- A digital quick-response thermometer. A digital thermometer should be a necessity in your kitchen anyway. With these thermometers you can quickly check the internal temperatures of food for doneness and safety.

What to do...

Do not open the refrigerator or freezer.

Tell your little ones not to open the door. An unopened refrigerator will keep foods cold enough for at least a couple of hours. A freezer that is half full will hold for up to 24 hours and a full freezer for 48 hours. (See chart on back for more details.)

If it looks like the power outage will be for more than 2-4 hours, pack refrigerated milk, dairy products, meats, fish, poultry, eggs, gravy, stuffing and leftovers into your cooler surrounded by ice. (See chart on back for more details.)

If it looks like the power outage will be prolonged, prepare a cooler with ice for your freezer items.

Q’s and A’s

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# What Should Be Discarded After A Power Outage?

As soon as the power returns, **check temperatures**. If the food in the freezer has ice crystals and is not above 40 degrees, you can refreeze. Perishable foods in the refrigerator should not be above **40 degrees F** for more than two hours. **Use this chart** to see what has to be discarded and what can be kept.

## Frozen Foods

**Meat and Mixed Dishes:**
- Beef, veal, lamb, pork, poultry, ground meat and poultry<br>  - Still Contains Ice Crystals: **REFREEZE**<br>  - Not Above 40° F: **KEEP**<br>  - Thawed, Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**
- Casseroles with meat, pasta, rice, egg or cheese base, stews, soups, convenience foods, pizza<br>  - Still Contains Ice Crystals: **REFREEZE**<br>  - Not Above 40° F: **KEEP**<br>  - Thawed, Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**
- Fish, shellfish, barded seafood products<br>  - Still Contains Ice Crystals: **REFREEZE**<br>  - Not Above 40° F: **KEEP**<br>  - Thawed, Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**

**Dairy:**
- Milk<br>  - Still Contains Ice Crystals: **REFREEZE**<br>  - Not Above 40° F: **KEEP**<br>  - Thawed, Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**
- Eggs (out of shell), egg products<br>  - Still Contains Ice Crystals: **REFREEZE**<br>  - Not Above 40° F: **KEEP**<br>  - Thawed, Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**
- Ice cream, frozen yogurt<br>  - Still Contains Ice Crystals: **REFREEZE**<br>  - Not Above 40° F: **KEEP**<br>  - Thawed, Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**
- Cheese (soft and semi soft), cream cheese, ricotta<br>  - Still Contains Ice Crystals: **REFREEZE**<br>  - Not Above 40° F: **KEEP**<br>  - Thawed, Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**
- Hard cheese (Cheddar, Swiss, Parmesan)<br>  - Still Contains Ice Crystals: **REFREEZE**<br>  - Not Above 40° F: **KEEP**<br>  - Thawed, Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**

**Fruits/Vegetables:**
- Fruit juices<br>  - Still Contains Ice Crystals: **REFREEZE**<br>  - Not Above 40° F: **KEEP**<br>  - Thawed, Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**
- Home or commercially packaged fruit<br>  - Still Contains Ice Crystals: **REFREEZE**<br>  - Not Above 40° F: **KEEP**<br>  - Thawed, Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**
- Vegetable juices<br>  - Still Contains Ice Crystals: **REFREEZE**<br>  - Not Above 40° F: **KEEP**<br>  - Thawed, Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**
- Home or commercially packaged or blanched vegetables<br>  - Still Contains Ice Crystals: **REFREEZE**<br>  - Not Above 40° F: **KEEP**<br>  - Thawed, Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**

## Baked Goods/Baking Ingredients:

- Flour, cornmeal, nuts<br>  - Still Contains Ice Crystals: **REFREEZE**<br>  - Not Above 40° F: **KEEP**<br>  - Thawed, Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**
- Pie crusts, breads, rolls, muffins, cakes (no custard fillings)<br>  - Still Contains Ice Crystals: **REFREEZE**<br>  - Not Above 40° F: **KEEP**<br>  - Thawed, Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**
- Cakes, pies, pastries with custard or cheese filling, cheesecake<br>  - Still Contains Ice Crystals: **REFREEZE**<br>  - Not Above 40° F: **KEEP**<br>  - Thawed, Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**
- Commercial and homemade bread dough<br>  - Still Contains Ice Crystals: **REFREEZE**<br>  - Not Above 40° F: **KEEP**<br>  - Thawed, Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**

## Refrigerator Foods

**Dairy/Eggs/Cheese:**
- Milk, cream, sour cream, buttermilk, evaporated milk, yogurt<br>  - Food Still Cold, Held At 40° F Or Above Under 2 Hours: **KEEP**<br>  - Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**
- Butter, margarine<br>  - Food Still Cold, Held At 40° F Or Above Under 2 Hours: **KEEP**<br>  - Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**
- Baby formula, opened<br>  - Food Still Cold, Held At 40° F Or Above Under 2 Hours: **KEEP**<br>  - Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**
- Eggs, egg dishes, custards, puddings<br>  - Food Still Cold, Held At 40° F Or Above Under 2 Hours: **KEEP**<br>  - Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**
- Hard & processed cheeses<br>  - Food Still Cold, Held At 40° F Or Above Under 2 Hours: **KEEP**<br>  - Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**
- Soft cheeses, cottage cheese<br>  - Food Still Cold, Held At 40° F Or Above Under 2 Hours: **KEEP**<br>  - Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**

**Fruits/Vegetables:**
- Fruit juices, opened; canned fruits, opened; fresh fruits<br>  - Food Still Cold, Held At 40° F Or Above Under 2 Hours: **KEEP**<br>  - Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**
- Vegetables, cooked; vegetable juice, opened<br>  - Food Still Cold, Held At 40° F Or Above Under 2 Hours: **KEEP**<br>  - Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**
- Baked potatoes<br>  - Food Still Cold, Held At 40° F Or Above Under 2 Hours: **KEEP**<br>  - Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**
- Fresh mushrooms, herbs, spices<br>  - Food Still Cold, Held At 40° F Or Above Under 2 Hours: **KEEP**<br>  - Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**
- Garlic, chopped in oil or butter<br>  - Food Still Cold, Held At 40° F Or Above Under 2 Hours: **KEEP**<br>  - Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**

**Meat/Poultry/Seafood:**
- Fresh or leftover meat, poultry, fish or seafood<br>  - Food Still Cold, Held At 40° F Or Above Under 2 Hours: **KEEP**<br>  - Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**
- Lunchmeats, hot dogs, bacon, sausage, dried beef<br>  - Food Still Cold, Held At 40° F Or Above Under 2 Hours: **KEEP**<br>  - Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**
- Canned meats (NOT labeled “Keep Refrigerated” but refrigerated after opening)<br>  - Food Still Cold, Held At 40° F Or Above Under 2 Hours: **KEEP**<br>  - Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**
- Canned hams labeled “ Keep Refrigerated”<br>  - Food Still Cold, Held At 40° F Or Above Under 2 Hours: **KEEP**<br>  - Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**

**Mixed Dishes/Side Dishes:**
- Casseroles, soups, stews, pizza with meat<br>  - Food Still Cold, Held At 40° F Or Above Under 2 Hours: **KEEP**<br>  - Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**
- Meat, tuna, shrimp, chicken, egg salad<br>  - Food Still Cold, Held At 40° F Or Above Under 2 Hours: **KEEP**<br>  - Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**
- Cooked pasta, pasta salads with mayonnaise or vinegar base<br>  - Food Still Cold, Held At 40° F Or Above Under 2 Hours: **KEEP**<br>  - Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**
- Gravy stuffing<br>  - Food Still Cold, Held At 40° F Or Above Under 2 Hours: **KEEP**<br>  - Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**

**Pies/Breads:**
- Cream- or cheese-filled pastries and pies<br>  - Food Still Cold, Held At 40° F Or Above Under 2 Hours: **KEEP**<br>  - Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**
- Fruit pies<br>  - Food Still Cold, Held At 40° F Or Above Under 2 Hours: **KEEP**<br>  - Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**
- Breads, rolls, cakes, muffins, quick breads<br>  - Food Still Cold, Held At 40° F Or Above Under 2 Hours: **KEEP**<br>  - Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**
- Refrigerator biscuits, rolls, cookie dough<br>  - Food Still Cold, Held At 40° F Or Above Under 2 Hours: **KEEP**<br>  - Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**

**Sauces/Spreads/Jams:**
- Mayonnaise, tartar sauce, horseradish<br>  - Food Still Cold, Held At 40° F Or Above Under 2 Hours: **KEEP**<br>  - Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**
- Opened salad dressing, jelly, relish, taco and barbecue sauce, mustard, catsup, olives<br>  - Food Still Cold, Held At 40° F Or Above Under 2 Hours: **KEEP**<br>  - Held Above 40° F For Over 2 Hours: **DISCARD**