

## DURING A POWER OUTAGE

- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed.
- The refrigerator will keep food safe for up to 4 hours. If the power is off longer, you can transfer food to a cooler and fill with ice or frozen gel packs. Make sure there is enough ice to keep food in the cooler at 40 °F or below. Add more ice to the cooler as it begins to melt.
- A full freezer will hold the temperature for approximately 48 hours (24 hours if it is half full).
- Obtain dry ice or block ice if your power is going to be out for a prolonged period. Fifty pounds of dry ice should hold an 18-cubic-foot freezer for 2 days. **(Caution: Do not touch dry ice with bare hands or place it in direct contact with food.)**
- In freezers, food in the front, in the door, or in small, thin packages will defrost faster than large, thick items or food in the back or bottom of the unit.
- During a snowstorm, do not place perishable food out in the snow. Outside temperatures can vary and food can be exposed to unsanitary conditions and animals. Instead, make ice. Fill buckets, empty milk containers, or cans with water and leave them outside to freeze. Use the homemade ice in your refrigerator, freezer, or coolers.

## AFTER A POWER OUTAGE

- **Never** taste food to determine its safety. **When In Doubt, Throw It Out!**

## REFRIGERATED FOODS

### Unsafe Foods

- Discard the following if your refrigerator has been without power for more than 4 hours:
  - raw, cooked, or leftover meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and egg substitutes;
  - luncheon meat and hot dogs;
  - casseroles, soups, stews, and pizza;
  - mixed salads (i.e., chicken, tuna, macaroni, potato);
  - gravy and stuffing;
  - milk, cream, yogurt, sour cream, and soft cheeses;
  - cut fruits and vegetables (fresh);
  - cooked vegetables;
  - fruit and vegetable juices (opened);
  - creamy-based salad dressing;
  - batters and doughs (i.e., pancake batter, cookie dough);
  - custard, chiffon, or cheese pies;
  - cream-filled pastries; and
  - garlic stored in oil.
- Discard opened mayonnaise, tartar sauce, and horseradish if they were held above 50 °F for over 8 hours.
- Discard any foods like bread or salad greens that may have become contaminated by juices dripping from raw meat, poultry, or fish.
- In general, if any food has an unusual odor, color, or texture, **throw it out.**

### Safe-to-Eat Foods

- High-acid foods such as mustard, ketchup, relishes, pickles, non-creamy salad dressings, jams, and jellies; however, they may spoil sooner.
- Foods that don't actually require refrigeration. These foods may be used unless they turn moldy or have an unusual odor:
  - whole fruits and vegetables (fresh);
  - fruit and vegetable juices (unopened);
  - dried fruits and coconut;
  - baked goods such as fruit pies, bread, rolls, muffins, and cakes (except those with cream cheese frosting or cream fillings);
  - hard and processed cheeses;
  - butter and margarine;
  - fresh herbs and spices;
  - flour; and

- o nuts.

## **FROZEN FOODS**

### **Safe-to-Eat Foods**

- Frozen foods that have thawed, but still contain ice crystals.
- Foods that have remained at refrigerator temperatures — 40 °F or below. They may be safely refrozen; however, their quality may suffer.
- Foods that don't actually need to be frozen. These foods may be used unless they turn moldy or have an unusual odor:
  - o dried fruits and coconut;
  - o baked goods including fruit pies, bread, rolls, muffins, and cakes (except for those with cream cheese frosting or cream fillings);
  - o hard and processed cheeses;
  - o butter and margarine;
  - o fruit juices; and
  - o nuts.
- **Never** taste food to determine its safety.

### **WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!**

### **REMOVING ODORS FROM REFRIGERATORS AND FREEZERS**

**The following steps may have to be repeated several times:**

- Dispose of any spoiled or questionable food.
- Remove shelves, crispers, and ice trays. Wash them thoroughly with hot water and detergent. Then rinse with a sanitizing solution of 1 tablespoon of unscented, liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of drinking water.
- Wash the interior of the refrigerator and freezer, including the door and gaskets, with hot water and baking soda. Rinse with a sanitizing solution (see above).
- Leave the door open for about 15 minutes.

**If odor remains, try any or all of the following:**

- Wipe the inside of the unit with equal parts of vinegar and water to destroy mildew.
- Leave the door open and allow to air out for several days.
- Stuff the refrigerator and freezer with rolled newspapers. Keep the door closed for several days. Remove the newspaper and clean with vinegar and water.
- Sprinkle fresh coffee grounds or baking soda loosely in a large, shallow container in the bottom of the unit.
- Use a commercial product available at hardware and houseware stores. Follow the manufacturer's instructions.

**Note: If odors still remain, the unit may need to be discarded.**

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