



## FOOD FACILITY POWER OUTAGE STEPS

### DO THIS FIRST!

- **Close the facility if:**
  - The facility does not have the proper lighting, refrigeration, ventilation or lacks hot water to safely clean and sanitize food contact surfaces. It's not safe to operate without lights, refrigeration, ventilation or hot water.
- **Write down the TIME when the power outage occurred.**
  - Your food safety "time clock" starts ticking when the power goes out.
- **Begin taking regular food TEMPERATURE readings.**
  - Have a food thermometer at-the-ready at all times.
  - Check hot foods every hour and cold foods every two hours.
  - Keep a time/temperature record for every item checked in every unit.

### FOOD SAFETY FACTORS

Watch these four food conditions carefully:

- A. Foods being cooked when power went off.**
  - Do not serve any partially cooked food.
  - If power outage is brief (under 1 hour), re-cook food to 165°F when power returns.
  - If power is out for more than 1 hour, discard all partially cooked food.
- B. Foods being held hot (e.g., 140°F or above in a warmer)**
  - Once food is below 140°F for more than four hours, discard it.
  - If food is below 140°F for less than four hours, rapidly reheat it to 165°F on stove or in oven before serving.
- C. Foods being held cold (e.g., 41°F or below in a refrigerator)**
  - Write down time when food rises above 41°F.
  - If food cannot be re-chilled to 41°F within four hours, discard it.
- D. Frozen foods that thaw out**
  - If thawed food does not exceed 41°F for more than four hours, it may be refrozen. (*Note: Refreezing can make some foods watery or mushy*).



## ROAD TO RECOVERY

### After the power comes back on...

1. Decide which foods to discard and which to salvage. Use time/temperature records and food safety factors described here.
2. Verify electrical breakers, utilities and all equipment are in working order.
3. Make sure hot water is being heated adequately for hand and ware washing.
4. Clean and sanitize food equipment and utensils as needed.
5. Call Environmental Health Services before reopening.

## READY TO REOPEN?

**You're ready to reopen only after making sure the food you are serving is safe.**

### **POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS FOODS (PHF)**

Foods to be most concerned about during a power outage include various egg, milk and meat products, cut melons and other perishables. Harmful microorganisms can grow in these foods and cause illnesses when between 41°F and 140°F. Examples:

- Meat and meat dishes
- Mixed dishes (soups, stews, casseroles, pasta/rice)
- Dairy and egg products (milk, eggs, cream sauces, soft cheeses)
- Cut melons, cooked vegetables (cut watermelon, honeydew, cooked peas)
- Some desserts (pumpkin pie, custard-filled pastry, cheesecake, meringue, chiffon)

### **NON-POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS FOODS (non-PHF)**

These foods may be kept at room temperature. Harmful microorganisms usually do not grow on these foods and do not cause illnesses. Discard these foods if quality deteriorates or mold grows on them. Examples:

- Breads, dry flour, dry pasta, dry rice, sugar
- Vinegar-based dressings, ketchup, relish, mustard, condiments
- High-sugar foods (jellies, fruit pies, dried fruit, juices)
- Hard cheeses, solid butter, whole fresh fruits/vegetables

### **KEEPING COLD FOOD COLD LONGER**

- Keep refrigerator doors closed, except while checking temperatures every two hours.



SAN MATEO COUNTY HEALTH

## ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

### Environmental Health Services

#### Food Program

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[smchealth.org/food](http://smchealth.org/food)

- Cover open coolers with tarps or blankets.
- Avoid adding hot foods to refrigerators.
- Group chilled foods together to reduce warming.  
*(Note: A closed refrigerator can keep food cold for up to four hours; a closed freezer for up to two days. A half-filled freezer will warm up twice as fast as a full one.)*

## HELPFUL HINTS

### Reduce the impact of a power outage by:

- Canceling incoming food supply shipments.
- Transferring food to off-site cold storage facilities.
- Placing dry ice blocks in refrigerators/freezers. A 25-pound block of dry ice can keep a 10-cubic-foot freezer cold for up to four days.  
*(Note: Dry ice produces carbon dioxide gas that should be ventilated.)*