

Steps to follow if the power goes out¹:

- Keep appliance thermometers in both the refrigerator and the freezer to ensure temperatures remain food safe during a power outage. Safe temperatures are 40°F or lower in the refrigerator, 0°F or lower in the freezer.
- Freeze water in one-quart plastic storage bags or small containers prior to storm. These containers are small enough to fit in around the food in the refrigerator and freezer to help keep food cold. Remember, water expands when it freezes so don't overfill the containers.
- Freeze refrigerated items, such as leftovers, milk and fresh meat and poultry that you may not need immediately - this helps keep them at a safe temperature longer.
- Know where you can get dry ice or block ice.
- Have coolers on hand to keep refrigerator food cold if the power will be out for more than four hours.
- Group foods together in the freezer – this 'igloo' effect helps food stay cold longer.
- Avoid putting food outside in ice or snow, because it attracts wild animals or could thaw when the sun comes out.
- Keep a few days' worth of ready-to-eat foods that do not require cooking or cooling.
- Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible.
 - A refrigerator will keep food cold for about 4 hours if the door is kept closed.
 - A freezer will hold its temperature for about 48 hours (24 hours if half-full).
- Place meat and poultry to one side of the freezer or on a tray to prevent cross contamination of thawing juices.
- Use dry or block ice to keep the refrigerator as cold as possible during an extended power outage. Fifty pounds of dry ice should keep a fully-stocked 18-cubic foot freezer cold for two days.

Steps to follow after a weather emergency:

- Check the temperature inside of your refrigerator and freezer. Discard any perishable food (such as meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, or leftovers) that has been above 40°F for two hours or more.
- Check each item separately. Throw out any food that has an unusual odor, color, or texture or feels warm to the touch.
- Check frozen food for ice crystals. The food in your freezer that partially or completely thawed may be safely refrozen if it still contains ice crystals or is 40°F or below.
- Never taste a food to decide if it's safe.
- **When in doubt, throw it out!**

Watch [this short video](#) for quick tips on food safety during power outages.

¹ Tips from FSIS, <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/home>