



## Food Safety Guidelines Following Power Outages

During a power failure it is important to consider the safety of all foods. A power outage can result in certain foods becoming potentially hazardous for consumption because foods cannot be maintained at 4C (40 F) or less.

### What To Do When Your Refrigerator Fails

- ❖ If unopened, food inside can stay safely cold for four to six hours, depending on how warm your kitchen is.
- ❖ A block of ice can be added to the refrigerator if electricity is off longer than four to six hours.
- ❖ If the power is not restored immediately, high-protein foods, such as: poultry, fish, meat, and dairy products, should be consumed as soon as possible. High-protein food can not be stored at room temperature.
- ❖ Fruits and vegetables can be stored at room temperature until they present signs of spoilage (mold, slime, and wilt).

### What To Do When Your Freezer Fails

- ❖ Keep your freezer closed as much as possible.
- ❖ Seek freezer space in a location that has electrical storage.
- ❖ Buy dry or block ice to keep the refrigerator as cold as possible if the power is going to be out for a prolonged period of time. Fifty pounds of dry ice should keep an 18 cubic foot, fully stocked freezer cold for two days. (Caution: Do not touch dry ice with your bare hands. Dry ice gives off carbon dioxide, so leave the door open a short time before examining your food.)
- ❖ If the food is still “cold-to-touch”, it may be cooked and eaten immediately, or refrozen.

### How To Properly Dispose of Food That Needs To Be Discarded

- ❖ Discard small amounts of spoiled food in the appropriate refuse bin.
- ❖ To discard large volumes of food, contact your refuse disposal company or your local landfill operator for disposal instructions/expedited service.
- ❖ Food may be disposed of by placing in garbage bags and placing in garbage receptacles for collection and disposal. Some products may require heavy duty garbage bags or double bagging to prevent leaks.

For more information call East Side Health District to speak with an Environmental Health sanitarian at 618-271-8722 ext. 538 or visit our website at [eastsidehealthdistrict.org](http://eastsidehealthdistrict.org)