



Food Safety During Power Outages

If the power is out for less than 2 hours, then the food in your refrigerator and freezer will be safe to consume. While the power is out, keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to keep food cold for longer.

If the power is out for longer than 2 hours, follow the guidelines below:

- For the Freezer section: A freezer that is half full will hold food safely for up to 24 hours. A full freezer will hold food safely for 48 hours. Do not open the freezer door if you can avoid it.
- For the Refrigerated section: Pack milk, other dairy products, meat, fish, eggs, gravy, and spoilable leftovers into a cooler surrounded by ice. Inexpensive Styrofoam coolers are fine for this purpose.
- Use a food thermometer to check the temperature of your food right before you cook or eat it. Throw away any food that has a temperature of more than 40 degrees Fahrenheit.

For guidelines on when to save, and when to throw out food during a power outage the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has provided the following information below:

Refrigerator Foods

| When to Save and When to Throw It Out | |
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| FOOD | Held above 40 °F for over 2 hours |
| MEAT, POULTRY, SEAFOOD Raw or leftover cooked meat, poultry, fish, or seafood; soy meat substitutes | Discard |
| Thawing meat or poultry | Discard |
| Meat, tuna, shrimp, chicken, or egg salad | Discard |
| Gravy, stuffing, broth | Discard |
| Lunchmeats, hot dogs, bacon, sausage, dried beef | Discard |
| Pizza – with any topping | Discard |
| Canned hams labeled "Keep Refrigerated" | Discard |
| Canned meats and fish, opened | Discard |
| CHEESE Soft Cheeses: blue/bleu, Roquefort, Brie, Camembert, cottage, cream, Edam, Monterey Jack, ricotta, mozzarella, Muenster, Neufchatel, queso blanco, queso fresco | Discard |

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| Hard Cheeses: Cheddar, Colby, Swiss, Parmesan, provolone, Romano | Safe |
| Processed Cheeses | Safe |
| Shredded Cheeses | Discard |
| Low-fat Cheeses | Discard |
| Grated Parmesan, Romano, or combination (in can or jar) | Safe |
| DAIRY Milk, cream, sour cream, buttermilk, evaporated milk, yogurt, eggnog, soy milk | Discard |
| Butter, margarine | Safe |
| Baby formula, opened | Discard |
| EGGS Fresh eggs, hard-cooked in shell, egg dishes, egg products | Discard |
| Custards and puddings | Discard |
| CASSEROLES, SOUPS, STEWS | Discard |
| FRUITS Fresh fruits, cut | Discard |
| Fruit juices, opened | Safe |
| Canned fruits, opened | Safe |
| Fresh fruits, coconut, raisins, dried fruits, candied fruits, dates | Safe |
| SAUCES, SPREADS, JAMS Opened mayonnaise, tartar sauce, horseradish | Discard if above 50 °F for over 8 hrs. |
| Peanut butter | Safe |
| Jelly, relish, taco sauce, mustard, catsup, olives, pickles | Safe |
| Worcestershire, soy, barbecue, Hoisin sauces | Safe |
| Fish sauces (oyster sauce) | Discard |
| Opened vinegar-based dressings | Safe |
| Opened creamy-based dressings | Discard |
| Spaghetti sauce, opened jar | Discard |
| BREAD, CAKES, COOKIES, PASTA, GRAINS Bread, rolls, cakes, muffins, quick breads | Safe |

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| tortillas | |
| Refrigerator biscuits, rolls, cookie dough | Discard |
| Cooked pasta, rice, potatoes | Discard |
| Pasta salads with mayonnaise or vinaigrette | Discard |
| Fresh pasta | Discard |
| Cheesecake | Discard |
| Breakfast foods –waffles, pancakes, bagels | Safe |
| PIES, PASTRY Pastries, cream filled | Discard |
| Pies – custard, cheese filled, or chiffon; quiche | Discard |
| Pies, fruit | Safe |
| VEGETABLES Fresh mushrooms, herbs, spices | Safe |
| Greens, pre-cut, pre-washed, packaged | Discard |
| Vegetables, raw | Safe |
| Vegetables, cooked; tofu | Discard |
| Vegetable juice, opened | Discard |
| Baked potatoes | Discard |
| Commercial garlic in oil | Discard |
| Potato Salad | Discard |

Frozen Food

| When to Save and When To Throw It Out | | |
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| FOOD | Still contains ice crystals and feels as cold as if refrigerated | Thawed. Held above 40 °F for over 2 hours |
| MEAT, POULTRY, SEAFOOD Beef, veal, lamb, pork, and ground meats | Refreeze | Discard |
| Poultry and ground poultry | Refreeze | Discard |
| Variety meats (liver, kidney, heart, chitterlings) | Refreeze | Discard |
| Cereals, soups | Refreeze | Discard |

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| soups | | |
| Fish, shellfish, breaded seafood products | Refreeze. However, there will be some texture and flavor loss. | Discard |
| DAIRY Milk | Refreeze. May lose some texture. | Discard |
| Eggs (out of shell) and egg products | Refreeze | Discard |
| Ice cream, frozen yogurt | Discard | Discard |
| Cheese (soft and semi-soft) | Refreeze. May lose some texture. | Discard |
| Hard cheeses | Refreeze | Refreeze |
| Shredded cheeses | Refreeze | Discard |
| Casseroles containing milk, cream, eggs, soft cheeses | Refreeze | Discard |
| Cheesecake | Refreeze | Discard |
| FRUITS Juices | Refreeze | Refreeze. Discard if mold, yeasty smell, or sliminess develops. |
| Home or commercially packaged | Refreeze. Will change texture and flavor. | Refreeze. Discard if mold, yeasty smell, or sliminess develops. |
| VEGETABLES Juices | Refreeze | Discard after held above 40 °F for 6 hours. |
| Home or commercially packaged or blanched | Refreeze. May suffer texture and flavor loss. | Discard after held above 40 °F for 6 hours. |
| BREADS, PASTRIES Breads, rolls, muffins, cakes (without custard) | Refreeze | Refreeze |

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| fillings) | | |
| Cakes, pies, pastries with custard or cheese filling | Refreeze | Discard |
| Pie crusts, commercial and homemade bread dough | Refreeze. Some quality loss may occur. | Refreeze. Quality loss is considerable. |
| OTHER Casseroles – pasta, rice based | Refreeze | Discard |
| Flour, cornmeal, nuts | Refreeze | Refreeze |
| Breakfast items – waffles, pancakes, bagels | Refreeze | Refreeze |
| Frozen meal, entree, specialty items (pizza, sausage and biscuit, meat pie, convenience foods) | Refreeze | Discard |