

When in doubt, throw it out!

Sudden power outages can be frustrating and troublesome, especially when they last a long time. If a power outage is 2 hours or less, you need not be concerned about losing your perishable foods. For prolonged power outages, though, there are steps you can take to minimize food loss and to keep all members of your household as comfortable as possible.

To help preserve your food, keep the following supplies in your home:

- ❑ One or more coolers—Inexpensive Styrofoam coolers work well
- ❑ Ice—Surrounding your food with ice in a cooler or in the refrigerator will keep food colder for a longer period of time during a prolonged power outage
- ❑ A digital quick-response thermometer—With these thermometers you can quickly check the internal temperatures of food to ensure they are cold enough to use safely

If someone in your home is dependent on electric-powered, life-sustaining equipment, remember to include backup power.

- ❑ Keep a non-cordless telephone in your home. It is likely to work even when the power is out
- ❑ Keep your car's gas tank full

Keep food as safe as possible.

- ❑ Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed
- ❑ First use perishable food from the refrigerator. An unopened refrigerator will keep food cold for about 4 hours
- ❑ Then use food from the freezer. A full freezer will keep the temperature for about 48 hours (24 hours if it is half full) if the door remains closed
- ❑ Use your non-perishable foods after using food from the refrigerator and freezer
- ❑ If it looks like the power outage will continue beyond a day, prepare a cooler with ice for your freezer items
- ❑ Keep food in a dry, cool spot and keep it covered at all times