



TOWN OF ANDOVER

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POWER OUTAGES

We practice basic safe food handling in our daily lives, but obtaining and storing food safely becomes more challenging during a power outage or natural disasters such as hurricanes and floods.

Steps to Follow to Prepare for a Possible Weather Emergency:

Keep an appliance thermometer in the refrigerator and freezer. An appliance thermometer will indicate the temperature in the refrigerator and freezer in case of a power outage and help determine the safety of the food.

- Make sure the freezer is at 0 °F (Fahrenheit) or below and the refrigerator is at 40 °F or below.
- Freeze containers of water for ice to help keep food cold in the freezer, refrigerator, or coolers after the power is out.
- 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.
- Plan ahead and know where dry ice and block ice can be purchased.
- Store food on shelves that will be safely out of the way of contaminated water in case of flooding.
- Have coolers on hand to keep refrigerator food cold if the power will be out for more than 4 hours. Purchase or make ice cubes and store in the freezer for use in the refrigerator or in a cooler. Freeze gel packs ahead of time for use in coolers.
- Group food together in the freezer—this helps the food stay cold longer.

Steps to Follow During and After the Weather Emergency:

- Never taste a food to determine its safety!
- Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to maintain the cold temperature.
- The refrigerator will keep food safely cold for about 4 hours if it is unopened. A full freezer will hold the temperature for approximately 48 hours (24 hours if it is half full and the door remains closed).
- Food may be safely refrozen if it still contains ice crystals or is at 40 °F or below.
- Obtain block ice or dry ice to keep your refrigerator and freezer as cold as possible if the power is going to be out for a prolonged period of time. Fifty pounds of dry ice should hold an 18-cubic-foot full freezer for 2 days.
- If the power has been out for several days, then check the temperature of the freezer with an appliance thermometer or food thermometer. If the food still contains ice crystals or is at 40 °F or below, the food is safe.
- If a thermometer has not been kept in the freezer, then check each package of food to determine its safety. If the food still contains ice crystals, the food is safe.
- Discard refrigerated perishable food such as meat, poultry, fish, soft cheeses, milk, eggs, leftovers, and deli items after 4 hours without power.
- **When in Doubt, Throw it Out!**

When to Save and When to Throw It Out

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

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 whole 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, tortillas Safe

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	Eggs (out of shell) and egg products		
VEGETABLES				
Fresh mushrooms, herbs, spices	Safe	Ice cream, frozen yogurt	Discard	Discard
When to Save and When To Throw It Out			Refreeze. May lose some texture.	Discard
Greens, pre-cut, pre-washed, packaged	Discard	Cheese (soft and semi-soft)	Refreeze	Refreeze
Vegetables, raw, whole	Safe	Shredded cheeses	Refreeze	Discard
Vegetables, cooked; tofu	Discard	Casseroles containing milk, cream, eggs, soft cheeses	Refreeze	Discard
Vegetable juice, opened	Discard	Cheesecake	Refreeze	Discard
Baked potatoes	Discard			
Commercial garlic in oil	Discard			
Potato Salad	Discard			

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
Casseroles, stews, soups	Refreeze	Discard
Fish, shellfish, breaded seafood products	Refreeze. However, there will be some texture and flavor loss.	Discard
DAIRY		
Milk	Refreeze. May lose some texture.	Discard
	Refreeze	Discard

FRUITS			Refreeze. Discard if mold, yeasty smell, or sliminess develops.
Juices	Refreeze		
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 fillings)	Refreeze		Refreeze
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

Source: USDA Food Safety & Inspection Service

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