



Public Health Department

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FOOD SAFETY DURING TEMPORARY POWER OUTAGES - PRIVATE HOMES -

This Food Safety Notice is being issued by the Butte County Public Health Department to provide guidance to private residences that have lost electricity for longer than two hours

Appropriate decision-making before, during, and immediately after power outages is necessary to protect consumers from unsafe food and minimize product loss. The food items of concern are those that are potentially hazardous foods (PHF). Generally, PHF are moist, perishable foods in and on which bacteria can grow most easily during the time when the food is held in the temperature danger zone (41°F to 135°F).

WHEN THERE IS A POWER OUTAGE

- Note the time at which the power outage begins.
- Discard food products that are in the process of being cooked, but which have not yet reached the final temperature.

Actions That Can Keep Food Safe for Several Hours

Cold Potentially Hazardous Foods

- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible
- If practical, group packages of cold food together to reduce heat gain
- Caution: The use of dry ice may result in unsafe build-up of CO₂ (Carbon Dioxide)

Hot Potentially Hazardous Foods

- Do not place hot foods in refrigerators or freezers
- Use ice and/or ice baths to rapidly cool small batches of hot food

Discontinue Food Preparation If Any of the Following Conditions Exist

- Lack of sufficient light in food preparation areas to allow for safe food preparation and cleaning and sanitizing of food contact surfaces.
- No hot water, inadequate water pressure
- Unsafe food temperatures (see tables on Page 2)



WHEN THE POWER IS RESTORED

- Identify PHF that may have been in the temperature danger zone
- Check the internal food temperature
- If practical, separate packages of food in refrigeration units and freezers to allow for faster re-cooling

Refrigerated Potentially Hazardous Food

Use the following table as a guide for handling PHF *stored in your refrigerator* during power outages:

Duration of Power Outage (in hours)	Food Temperatures		
	45°F	46°F to 50°F	More than 50°F
0-2	PHF is considered safe	Cool PHF to 41°F or below within 2 hours	PHF should not be considered safe
2-3	PHF is considered safe, but must be cooled to 41°F or below within 12 hours	Cool PHF to 41°F or below within 1 hour	
4+		PHF is not considered safe	

WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!!

Questions or Additional Information?

Contact Butte County Public Health Department staff at: (530) 552-3880 during normal working hours, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.