



Public Health Administration

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HEALTH DEPARTMENT ISSUES PRECAUTIONS FOR POWER OUTAGE

OROVILLE, CA – Butte County Public urges residents to take steps to prevent negative health impacts during a prolonged PG&E Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) event. A PSPS may occur on Wednesday, October 9th, lasting several days.

Food Safety Before, During and After a Power Shutoff

Knowing the proper food safety precautions to take before, during and after a power outage can prevent food poisoning and food borne illnesses. Before a power outage, make sure to have appliance thermometers in your refrigerator and freezer. Check that the freezer temperature is at or below 0° F, and the refrigerator is at or below 40° F. In case of a power outage, the appliance thermometers will indicate the temperatures in the refrigerator and freezer to help you determine if the food is safe.

Additional steps you can take before a power outage, include:

- Freeze containers of water for ice to help keep food cold in the freezer, refrigerator or coolers in case the power goes out. Melting ice can also supply drinking water.
- 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.
- Group food together in the freezer. This helps the food stay cold longer.
- Have coolers on hand to keep refrigerated food cold if the power will be out for more than four hours.

During a power outage, keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible. The food in your refrigerator will keep safe for up to four hours during a power outage. A full freezer will hold a safe temperature for approximately 48 hours (24 hours if it is half-full and the door remains closed).

After a power outage, never taste food to determine its safety. Each food item will need to be evaluated separately – When in doubt, throw it out! **Perishable food such as meat, poultry, seafood, milk and eggs that are not kept adequately refrigerated or frozen may cause illness if consumed, even when they are thoroughly cooked.**

Learn more about [Food Safety During a Power Outage](#).

Drinking Water Safety During a Power Shutoff

When power goes out, water purification systems may not be functioning fully. Safe water for drinking, cooking, and personal hygiene includes bottled, boiled, or treated water. If residents are concerned about their water during a PSPS, they should contact their water service provider for updates.

Carbon Monoxide Exposure During a Power Shutoff

Portable generators and heaters are commonly used when temporary power is needed. If used incorrectly, exhaust from gas powered generators and heaters can cause carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning and death. CO is a colorless, odorless, and toxic gas that kills without warning. Symptoms of CO poisoning include dizziness, headaches, nausea, and tiredness.

Prevent Carbon Monoxide Exposure and Poisoning:

- Never use a generator inside your home or garage, even if the doors and windows are open.
- Only use generators outside, more than 20 feet away from your home, doors and windows.
- Install battery-operated CO detectors near every sleeping area in your home.
- Seek medical assistance if you suspect CO poisoning and are feeling dizzy, light-headed or nauseated. Get the person out of the CO affected area immediately and seek fresh air.

There are other items can cause CO poisoning and should never be used inside your home or garage. These include charcoal grills, camp stoves, or other gasoline or charcoal-burning devices.

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