



10-02-O

**For Immediate Release**

January 20, 2010

[www.buttecounty.net/publichealth](http://www.buttecounty.net/publichealth)

**Phone:**

(530) 895-6565- Chico  
(530) 538-7583- Oroville

**Fax:**

(530) 891-2873- Chico  
(530) 538-2164- Oroville

**Mailing Address:**

695 Oleander Avenue  
Chico, CA 95926

202 Mira Loma Drive  
Oroville, CA 95965

## **PUBLIC HEALTH URGES PERSONAL SAFETY MEASURES IN THE EVENT OF POWER OUTAGES AND FLOODING**

BUTTE COUNTY, Calif. — The Butte County Public Health Department urges the public to consider personal safety measures with regard to food and private wells in the event of severe weather which may cause power outages and flooding.

To keep food safe in the event of a power outage, please keep the following in mind:

- Do not open the refrigerator or freezer doors unnecessarily.
- A power outage of two hours or less is not considered hazardous to food that is held under safe conditions when the outage begins. If a refrigerator or freezer was kept closed as much as possible for two hours or less it should be safe.
- A freezer that is half-full will hold food safely for up to 24 hours if the door remains closed.
- A full freezer will hold food safely for up to 48 hours if the door remains closed.
- If you put foods on ice or in ice chests to try to save food, you can use a food thermometer to check the temperature of your food right before you cook or eat it, and throw away any food that has a temperature of more than 45 degrees Fahrenheit.
- If an appliance thermometer was kept in the freezer, read the temperature when the appliance comes back on. If the food still contains ice crystals or is 45 degrees Fahrenheit or below, it is safe to refreeze.
- Discard any perishable food that is in your freezer or refrigerator that has been above 45 degrees Fahrenheit longer than 2 hours. Common perishables may include meat, fish, eggs and leftovers.
- Don't taste food to see if it's still "good". When in doubt, throw it out.

In the event of flooding, the following information should be considered regarding the safety of water from private well systems:

## PUBLIC HEALTH URGES PERSONAL SAFETY MEASURES IN THE EVENT OF POWER OUTAGES AND FLOODING – 2

- If there was flooding around your well, or your well was submerged, you should assume the water was contaminated and do not drink it.
- If the water from your well looks cloudy and dirty, you should not drink it. Acquire bottled water for drinking and cooking.
- When your normal water service returns, you should flush the line until the water appears clear and the water quality returns to normal.
- If you are concerned about the water quality or its safety for regular use, you can add 8 drops of household bleach to 1 gallon clear water or 16 drops to 1 gallon of cloudy water and let it sit for 30 minutes. If you are able, water can also be boiled. The water should be brought to a rolling boil and continued for one minute.
- If you still have concerns about the quality of water in your well, you may call a water well contractor or a certified water treatment specialist. You may also call the Butte County Public Health Department, Division of Environmental Health for further assistance at (530) 538-7281.

###

For further information contact Vance Severin, Deputy Director of Environmental Health or Mike Boian, Supervisor, Environmental Health Specialist, phone: (530) 538-7281.

### **Butte County Public Health Department**

Our Mission: To protect the public through promoting individual, community and environmental health.