



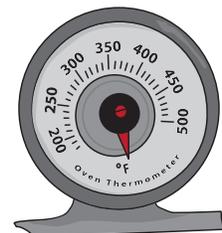
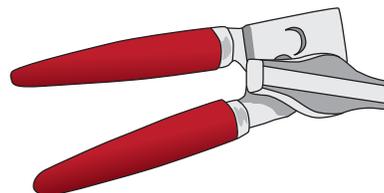
# Fact Sheet

## Keeping Food Safe During Power Outages

### Prepare Ahead of Time for Power Outages



- Fill plastic containers such as milk jugs or drink bottles with water and freeze. Leave an inch of space at the top for expansion. These can be used in refrigerators, freezers, and coolers during a power outage to keep food cold.
  - Group food together in the freezer so it will stay cold longer.
  - Locate a source for dry ice and block ice.
  - Keep coolers on hand to hold refrigerated food when the power is out for more than 4 hours.
  - Have foods on hand that don't need to be refrigerated and can be eaten cold.
- Non-perishable food ideas:
    - ♦ Canned juice
    - ♦ Ready-to-serve pudding
    - ♦ Canned or dried fruit
    - ♦ Canned tuna, beef, chicken, or pork
    - ♦ Peanut butter
    - ♦ Crackers
    - ♦ Canned nuts and seeds
  - Purchase a manual can opener, paper cups, plates and utensils for emergency use.
  - Keep bottled water and nonfat dry or canned milk on hand for use in emergencies.
  - Be sure to have appliance thermometers in refrigerators and freezers at all times so temperatures can be checked during an outage.



## During the Power Outage

A refrigerator will keep food safely for about 4 hours if not opened. If the power is out for more than 2 hours, use the following procedures to maintain the temperature:

- For the freezer: If the freezer is half full, the food will hold safely for up to 24 hours. If the freezer is full, it should hold safely for 48 hours. Keep the door closed as much as possible.
- For refrigerated food: pack dairy products, meat, fish, eggs, and spoilable leftovers in a cooler packed with ice. Styrofoam coolers will work fine.
- If any food reaches a temperature above 40 °F, discard it.



## After the Power Has Returned

- Check the temperature of the freezer when power returns. If it is 40 °F or below, the food is safe to cook or to refreeze.
- If the frozen food has not been kept in the freezer, check each package of food with a food thermometer. If 40 °F or below or if it has ice crystals, it may be cooked or refrozen.
- Check the temperature of refrigerated food with a food thermometer and dispose of any food that has reached a temperature of more than 40 °F.
- Any perishable foods that were above 40 °F for 2 hours or more are not safe to eat and should be discarded.

## References

- American Red Cross. (2008). *Blackouts*. Retrieved November 14, 2008, from [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)
- U.S. Department of Agriculture. Food Safety and Inspection Service. (2006). *Emergency preparedness: Keeping food safe during an emergency*. Retrieved October 23, 2008, from [www.fsis.usda.gov](http://www.fsis.usda.gov)
- U.S. Department of Agriculture. *Safe food handling: A consumer's guide to food safety: Severe storms and hurricanes*. Retrieved October 23, 2008, from [www.fsis.usda.gov](http://www.fsis.usda.gov)
- U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Centers for Disease Control. (2008). *What you need to know when the power goes out unexpectedly*. Retrieved November 14, 2008, from [www.bt.cdc.gov](http://www.bt.cdc.gov)

This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service through a grant agreement with The University of Mississippi. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government. The University of Mississippi is an EEO/AA/Title VI/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA Employer.