

FOOD SAFETY DURING POWER OUTAGES

The OC Health Care Agency’s Environmental Health Division offers the following food safety tips to prevent foodborne illness in the event of a Public Safety Power Shutoff or other electricity outage:

- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed. Maintain food items such as meat or poultry at 41°F or less.
- Do not place hot or unrefrigerated foods in the refrigerator once the power has gone out. This will raise the temperature inside the unit. If the temperature cannot be brought down to 41°F or less, these foods should be discarded.
- Use block ice or bagged ice for supplemental cooling if necessary.
- If the freezer is not full, group packages together so they will retain the cold more effectively. Without power, a full freezer will keep everything frozen for about 2 days. A half-full freezer will keep food frozen 1 day.
- If advance warning of a power outage is provided and the outage is anticipated to last more than 4 hours, move foods that must be refrigerated to the freezer as space will allow.
- Keep meat and poultry items separate from other foods and on the bottom shelves so their juices will not drip on to other foods if they begin to thaw.
- When the power comes back on, all potentially hazardous foods must be evaluated for proper temperatures. Potentially hazardous foods found above 41°F for more than 2 hours should be discarded. Potentially hazardous food items found above 41°F for less than 2 hours should be used as soon as possible. Frozen food that has been thawed should not be refrozen. Cook foods to proper temperatures to ensure food safety.

FOOD	INTERNAL COOKING TEMPERATURE
Eggs	145°F for 15 seconds
Pork	145°F for 15 seconds
Ground Meats	155°F for 15 seconds
Poultry and Stuffed Meats	165°F for 15 seconds

Learn more about food safety at www.ocfoodinfo.com, emergency preparedness at www.readyoc.org, and don’t forget to register for Orange County’s emergency mass notification system at www.alertoc.com.