

# POWER OUTAGE PREPAREDNESS FOOD SAFETY

## BEFORE AN OUTAGE

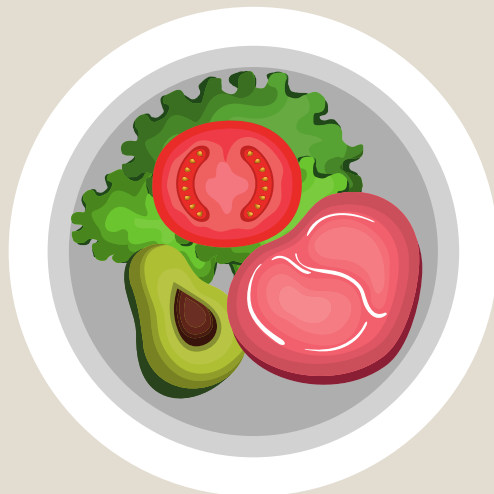
- Organize your freezer by grouping packages together so they will retain the cold more effectively.
- Keep meat and poultry items separated from other foods so if they begin to thaw, their juices will not contaminate other items.
- Obtain an appliance thermometer to keep in the freezer.
- If you have advanced notice of an outage lasting more than 4 hours, move foods that must be refrigerated into the freezer as space will allow.

## DURING AN OUTAGE

- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed.
- Do not place hot or room temperature food in the refrigerator once the power has gone out. It will raise the temperature inside the unit. Any foods that were prepared prior to the power outage that were not rapidly cooled should be discarded.
- Use block ice or bagged ice for supplemental cooling.

## AFTER AN OUTAGE

- All potentially hazardous foods must be evaluated for proper temperatures. Bacteria can rapidly multiply on foods such as meat or poultry that have been at room temperature for more than two hours.
- If an appliance thermometer was kept in the freezer, check the temperature when the power comes back on. If thermometer reads 40 degrees or below, food is safe to refreeze or cook.
- Discard any perishable food in the refrigerator that has been above 40 degrees for 2 hours or more.



## FAST TIPS

- Without power, a full freezer will keep everything frozen for approximately 2 days.
- A half full freezer will keep food frozen 1 day.
- Perishable food should be discarded if it has been above 40 degrees for 2 hours or more.
- When in doubt, throw it out.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

- For specific questions regarding food handling, call the U.S. Department of Agriculture Meat and Poultry Hotline 1-888-674-6854 or visit [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov).
- For additional preparedness resources visit [www.ReadySLO.org](http://www.ReadySLO.org) or call the Office of Emergency Services at (805) 781-5011.



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