



Safety Tips for Operators During a Power Failure

A power outage can cause food to spoil and make it unsafe to eat due to lack of refrigeration and proper sanitization methods. The following food safety tips will help you safely handle food to reduce the risk of food-borne illnesses.

Freezer:

- Without electrical power, a full upright or chest freezer will keep contents frozen for approximately two days. A freezer that is half-full will keep food frozen for one day
- Food will last longer by **keeping the freezer door closed as much as possible**. Ice will also help keep the contents frozen
- Food items that still contain ice crystals can be refrozen

Refrigerator-freezer combination:

- Without electrical power, the refrigerator section will keep food cool for four to six hours provided that the **door is kept closed as much as possible**. Ice will also help keep the contents in the refrigerator cool
- Throw out any food with an off colour or odour as soon as possible
- Find an alternate approved facility for storage of the hazardous food products that must be refrigerated

Hot Holding:

- Hot food items on a steam table should be **discarded** if the temperature is below 60°C/140°F for more than two hours
- Discard any hazardous food that has been sitting at room temperature for more than two hours
- **IF IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!**

Drinking water supply from a private well:

When a power outage occurs, water disinfection systems may not be fully functioning.

- When power is restored it is recommended that **all water-using fixtures or pieces of equipment should be**

re-started, flushed and sanitized in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications. This may vary from fixture to fixture. Water filters, softeners and treatment devices may need to be completely replaced. The manufacturer should be consulted for specific guidance when re-starting equipment

- If your water supply is disinfected by chlorination, flush the lines and ensure that the chlorine residual is at least 0.05mg/l before using it
- If your water supply is disinfected by Ultraviolet (U.V.) light, then ensure the U.V. light is functioning according to manufactures guidelines and flush the lines before using it
- If your water supply is not disinfected, it is recommended that the lines are flushed and a water sample is submitted to a private accredited lab for bacteriological analysis to confirm it is acceptable to use. If the water is not safe to use, an alternative safe supply can be provided (bottled, boiled or treated from the approved source) in order to continue your operation

Other considerations:

Ensure that the following is completed prior to re-opening the establishment:

- ✓ All internal temperatures of coolers are 4°C/40°F or lower and freezers are -18°C/0°F or lower
- ✓ All temperatures of steam tables/hot holding units 60°C/140°F or higher
- ✓ Hot water is available
- ✓ Lighting and ventilation are operable
- ✓ Do not use contaminated water to wash your hands. You can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer to wash your hands until a safe water supply is available
- ✓ Do not stock up on perishable food prior to the scheduled power outage

For more information this and other health-related issues *Health Connection* at 1-800-361-5653 to speak to a Public Health Inspector.