



## *Bite-Sized Food Safety*



*August  
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Food safety resources  
for front-line managers  
to train food workers

## What Food Service Facilities Should Do During and After a Power Outage

Do your managers and food staff know what to do during a power outage at your food establishment? Whether it is hurricane season, a bad snow storm, or a downed power line, make sure your restaurant is prepared to handle an emergency. Our number one goal is to keep the food and your patrons safe.



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### Prepare

- ◆ Have a plan ready for your staff to follow during a power outage
- ◆ Create an emergency kit (just like you would at your house) with flashlights, batteries, bottled water, and essentials
- ◆ Make sure you have food thermometers as these are essential to check the maintenance of proper food temperatures
- ◆ Create a list of important numbers (owner, managers, utility & power companies)

- ◆ Train your staff regularly on what to do during an emergency
- ◆ Consider installing a backup electrical generator for your facility
- ◆ If you serve a captive audience (hospital, nursing home, assisted living facility, jail, school), create an emergency stockpile of foods that don't require cooking, refrigeration, or preparation that can be served in an emergency
- ◆ Stay informed about possible severe weather events that might effect your electrical power

## During a Power Outage

### General

- ◆ Assist any patrons or guests safely out of the restaurant if the outage is expected to last longer than a few minutes. Then close until the power is restored
- ◆ **Call the Jefferson County Health Department!** Let them know that you have lost power at your facility. During normal working hours call **(304) 728-8416**. After office hours and on weekends and holidays call the JCHD Emergency number - **(304) 820-3658**.
- ◆ Implement your emergency plan
- ◆ If you serve a captive audience (hospital, nursing home, assisted living facility, jail, school), serve foods from your emergency stockpile that don't require cooking, refrigeration, or preparation

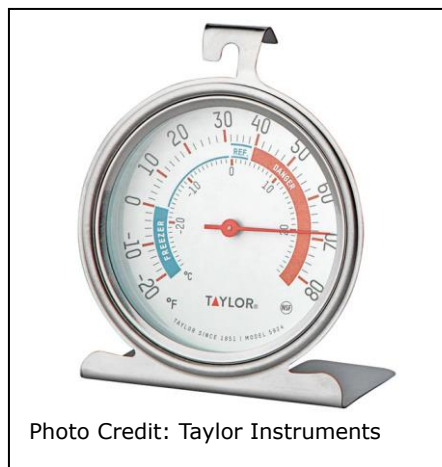


Photo Credit: Taylor Instruments

### Refrigerators and Freezers

- ◆ **DO NOT OPEN REFRIGERATORS OR FREEZERS AFTER POWER GOES OUT**
- ◆ Refrigerators and freezers can keep foods cold for a fairly long time **IF** they are not opened
- ◆ Place ice or dry ice in freezer for prolonged periods of outage.
- ◆ Consider renting a refrigerated truck and moving your refrigerated foods into it if you expect the power outage to be of prolonged duration

### Hot Foods

- ◆ Cease all cooking operations and discard any undercooked foods
- ◆ Do not place hot food in a refrigerator or freezer as it will rapidly raise the internal temperature
- ◆ Instead use ice or ice baths to rapidly cool small batches of fully-cooked hot food and then hold them cold (below 41°F) in a cooler or on ice
- ◆ Discard any hot held foods that can't be rapidly cooled if they drop below 135°F for more than 2 hours

### Hygiene and Cleaning

- ◆ Continue to practice good personal and food hygiene

- ◆ If available, continue to utilize water and sanitizer to clean surfaces, utensils, and dishes
- ◆ Wash hands often and, if clean water is unavailable, utilize hand sanitizers

### **Food Temperature Monitoring**

Pay special attention to the foods requiring temperature control for safety. These are foods such as high protein foods (meat, eggs, dairy) and cooked vegetables that support the rapid and progressive growth of disease-causing bacteria. Bacteria that can cause foodborne illness can multiply rapidly in foods when the food is the temperature danger zone (41° to 135°F).

**Refrigerator:** **Keep doors closed.** Discard any foods requiring temperature control for safety that have been above 41°F for greater than four hours.

**Freezer:** **Keep doors closed.** Bunch items together to keep temperatures down. Try to maintain all foods frozen solid. Refrigerate thawed food items that are below 41°F. Do not refreeze them. Discard frozen food items above 41°F.

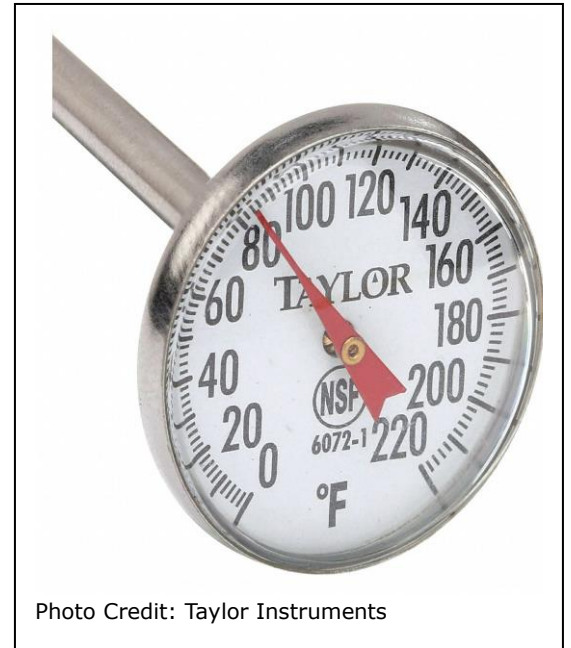


Photo Credit: Taylor Instruments

### **After a Power Outage**

- ◆ Check the electrical circuit breakers. Ensure that all powered utilities are working properly
- ◆ Check all foods with a food thermometer to ensure they are out of the temperature danger zone (41° to 135°F) and still safe to serve consumers
- ◆ Separate refrigerated and freezer items to assist in the rapid cooling of the products that are still safe.
- ◆ Discard any items that are not safe!
- ◆ The following foods should be immediately discarded after 4 hours above 41°F:
  - Meat, poultry, fish, and seafood – raw or cooked
  - Eggs and egg substitutes – raw or cooked
  - Milk, cream, and soft cheese
  - Casseroles, stews, and soups
  - Luncheon meats and hot dogs
  - Cream-based foods made on-site
  - Custard, chiffon, pumpkin, or cheese pies
  - Cream-filled pastries
  - Cookie dough made with eggs
  - Whipped butter
  - Cut melons

**WHEN IN DOUBT,  
THROW IT OUT!**

- Bean or alfalfa sprouts
- Cut tomatoes
- Salsa
- Cooked vegetables
- ◆ The following foods can be kept safely (although food taste or quality may suffer):
  - Butter or margarine
  - Hard and processed cheeses
  - Fresh uncut fruits and vegetables
  - Dried fruits and coconut
  - Opened jars of vinegar-based salad dressings, jelly, pickle relish, taco sauce, barbecue sauce, mustard, ketchup, olives, pickles, and peanut butter
  - Fruit juices
  - Fresh herbs and spices
  - Breads, rolls, and muffins
  - Fruit pies
  - Cakes, except cream cheese frosted or cream-filled
  - Flour and sugar
  - Syrup
  - Nuts
- ◆ Check to be sure there is no other damage to the food establishment
- ◆ **Call the Jefferson County Health Department!** Your restaurant will likely need to be checked by a Sanitarian before reopening. This means a brief visit to ensure that your establishment is safe and ready to open again for business.

***For more information, contact the Jefferson County Health Department.***



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