

Food Safety During a Power Outage

Perishable foods in your refrigerator and freezer may not be safe to consume after an electric outage, depending on the length of the outage and outdoor temperatures. There are steps you can take to make sure your food is still safe to eat once the fridge is running again.

- **Keep the refrigerator closed**, opening doors only when necessary. Depending on the outside temperature, an unopened refrigerator can keep foods cold enough for several hours. Placing blocks of ice inside will also help keep food cold longer. Check food carefully for signs of spoilage.
- **Draw the line at 40 degrees.** Perishable foods should not be held above 40 degrees Fahrenheit for more than two hours.
- **Coolers and ice chests.** For outages lasting more than two hours, food items such as dairy products, meats, fish, poultry, eggs, and leftovers should be packed into a cooler with ice. A separate cooler can be packed with frozen items.
- **Canned and dry goods** can be eaten cold or warmed on a grill.
- **Leave a light on** when you go to bed. It will wake you when power returns so you can check the condition of your food.
- **If you're not home** when a power outage occurs, determine how long power has been out. Check the internal temperature of perishables in your refrigerator with a quick-response thermometer – any item above 40 degrees should be thrown out. If power comes back on within 24 hours, and your freezer is fairly full, your frozen items should be safe. If the refrigerator was out for more than 24 hours, you should get rid of perishables.

For more information, please visit <https://www.sce.com/outage-center/preparing-for-outages>