



CITY OF LONG BEACH

Department of Health and Human Services

2525 Grand Ave • Long Beach, Ca 90815 • (562) 570 - 4132

INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN No. 2014-09-30

Food Safety During Power Outages

A power outage can occur at any time. When the power goes out, a food facility cannot operate (cooking, prepping, serving, selling) and must temporarily close for business until the power is fully restored. Proper food safety is a must during a power outage to avoid causing foodborne illness.

When the Power Goes Out . . .

- Discontinue all food preparation, cooking, service, sales, etc...
- Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to maintain the cold temperature.
- The refrigerator will keep food cold for about 4 hours if it is unopened.
- A full freezer will keep the temperature for approximately 48 hours (24 hours if it is half full) if the door remains closed.
- Buy dry or block ice to keep the refrigerator as cold as possible if the power is going to be out for a prolonged period of time. Fifty pounds of dry ice should hold an 18-cubic foot fully-stocked freezer cold for two days.
- If you plan to eat refrigerated or frozen meat, poultry, fish or eggs while it is still at safe temperatures, it's important that each item is thoroughly cooked to the proper temperature to assure that any foodborne bacteria that may be present is destroyed. However, if at any point the food was above 40 °F for 2 hours or more — discard it.
- Wash all fruits and vegetables with water from a safe source before eating.
- Discard all foods that are in the cooking process.



CITY OF LONG BEACH

Department of Health and Human Services

2525 Grand Ave • Long Beach, Ca 90815 • (562) 570 - 4132

Once Power is Restored . . .

You'll need to determine the safety of your food. Here's how:

- If an appliance thermometer was kept in the freezer, check the temperature when the power comes back on. If the freezer thermometer reads 40°F or below, the food is safe and may be refrozen.
- If a thermometer has not been kept in the freezer, check each package of food to determine its safety. You can't rely on appearance or odor. If the food still contains ice crystals or is 40 °F or below, it is safe to refreeze or cook.
- Refrigerated food should be safe as long as the power was out for no more than 4 hours and the refrigerator door was kept shut. Discard any perishable food (such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs or leftovers) that has been above 40°F for two hours or more.
- Keep in mind that perishable food such as meat, poultry, seafood, milk, and eggs that are not kept adequately refrigerated or frozen may cause illness if consumed, even when they are thoroughly cooked.
- When in doubt, throw it out. Do not take any chances with foods that you are unsure if it is safe. Dispose of any unsafe foods.
- Use a probe thermometer to take the internal temperatures of each food item stored inside the refrigerators.

Useful Contact Information

- Southern California Edison - (888) 759-6056
- Long Beach Health Department- (562) 570-4132

Bureau of Environmental Health • Food Inspection Program

“promotes and safeguards the quality of life in Long Beach by preventing disease and eliminating environmental hazards”