



County of Santa Cruz

Health Services Agency - Environmental Health

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Protecting Perishable Food During a Power Outage

- Discontinue all food preparation until power is restored.
- If refrigerator and freezer doors are kept closed, safe food temperatures can be maintained below 41°F (refrigerator cold) for several hours.
- When power is restored, all potentially hazardous food must be temperature checked to determine if it can be consumed.
 - If perishable foods are below 41°F, they may be consumed.
 - Use the chart below to determine what food to keep when food is above 41°F:

length of outage	Internal Temperature of REFRIGERATED Potentially Hazardous Foods (PHF) when power is restored		
	45°F or below	46°F to 50°F	50°F or above
0-2 hours	PHF can be sold	Immediately cool PHF to 41°F or below within 2 hours	PHF cannot be sold
2-3 hours	PHF can be sold, but must be cooled to 41°F or below within 2 hours	Immediately cool PHF to 41°F or below within 1 hour	
4 or more hours	Immediately cool PHF to 41°F or below within 1 hour	PHF cannot be sold	
If food cannot be cooled as specified above, it cannot be sold			
length of outage	Potentially Hazardous Foods (PHF) in HOT HOLDING Units below 135°F when power is restored		
0-2 hours	1. Food may be sold if reheated to 165°F and then held at 135°F or above; OR 2. Food may be sold if cooled to 41°F or below within 2 hours following restoration of power; if food cannot be cooled within 2 hours, it cannot be sold.		
2 or more hours	PHF cannot be sold		

- If generators are not available to maintain power to refrigerators and freezers during an extended power outage, then all potentially hazardous foods must be discarded.

WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!

- If you operate a food facility, the Environmental Health inspectors may visit to verify your facility is handling food safely.