



Meal Prep and Food Safety During a Power Outage

After a storm or natural disaster, you may experience power failure and may not have refrigeration, water or heat for cooking. To prepare food without power or safe water, follow these guidelines.



Keeping Frozen Foods

- Full freezers stay colder longer.
- Packing freezers with ice and keeping the door closed can help keep food cold.
- Foods are still safe to eat as long as they stay at or below 41°F.
- Foods that stayed below 41°F can be safely refrozen. However, there may be changes in quality.
- Check temperatures with a tip-sensitive thermometer.

Cooking Without Power

- Use an outdoor grill, fireplace, camp stove or charcoal burner.
- Choose foods that cook quickly. Avoid frozen foods because they require more heat and cooking time than shelf-stable foods.
- Eat commercially packaged foods straight from the container.

Cooking Without Safe Water

- Substitute canned stocks/broths or liquids from canned fruits, vegetables for water.
- Clear water from questionable sources should be brought to a rolling boil for 1 minute and cooled before use. Cloudy water should be filtered before boiling.
- Water can be treated with unscented bleach. For clear water, add 1/8 teaspoon bleach per gallon. For cloudy water, add 1/4 teaspoon bleach per gallon. Allow to stand for 30 minutes before drinking or using for cooking.

No Power for Refrigeration

- If without refrigeration, only open enough cans or jars of food for one meal as leftover food in jars and cans cannot be saved.
- Prepare and eat foods in their original containers.
- If necessary, substitute canned and powdered milk for fresh milk.
- Leafy greens, tomatoes and melons should be eaten within 4 hours of being cut or throw away.

Cooking Food Safely

- Never use outdoor grills or burners inside your home, even in a fireplace. Fumes from grills and camping stoves can be deadly.
- Never use lighter fluid in a fireplace, as flames can cause damage to the home.
- When cooking, heat foods to the following internal temperatures for food safety: Eggs, whole meats, fish: **145°F**; Ground meats, fish: **158°F**; Whole and ground poultry: **165°F**.