



Chapter 14  
**FOOD SAFETY  
DURING  
A POWER  
OUTAGE**

Is food in the refrigerator safe during and after a power outage? It should be safe as long as power is out for no more than four hours. Keep the door closed as much as possible. If you know a power outage is likely, freeze water in plastic bags (or purchase frozen cold packs) and pack the refrigerator with them as soon as the power goes out. A few on each shelf can help keep the food below 40°F longer. Discard any perishable food (such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and leftovers) that has been above 40°F for over two hours.

Some homeowner's insurance policies or power companies cover the cost of food lost during a power outage. Check with your insurance company or power supplier to see if you can be reimbursed so you can restock when the power comes back on.

### DISCARD TIMES FOR REFRIGERATED FOODS AFTER POWER OUTAGE

*Adapted from [foodsafety.gov](http://foodsafety.gov).*

Food Categories	Specific Foods	Held above 40°F for over 2 Hours
<b>MEAT, POULTRY, SEAFOOD</b>	Raw or leftover cooked meat, poultry, fish, seafood; soy meat substitutes	Discard
	Meat or poultry in the process of thawing	Discard
	Salads: meat, tuna, shrimp, chicken, egg	Discard
	Gravy, stuffing, broth	Discard
	Lunch meats, hot dogs, bacon, sausages, dried beef	Discard
	Pizza—with any topping	Discard
	Canned hams labeled "Keep Refrigerated"	Discard
	Canned meats and fish, opened	Discard
	Casseroles, soups, stews	Discard
<b>CHEESE</b>	Soft cheeses: blue-veined, Roquefort, Brie, Camembert, cottage, cream, Edam, Monterey Jack, ricotta, mozzarella, Muenster, Neufchâtel, queso blanco, queso fresco	Discard
	Hard cheeses: cheddar, Colby, Swiss, Parmesan, provolone, Romano	Safe
	Processed cheeses	Safe
	Shredded cheeses	Discard
	Low-fat cheeses	Discard
	Grated Parmesan, Romano, or combination (in can or jar)	Safe
<b>DAIRY</b>	Milk, cream, sour cream, buttermilk, evaporated milk, yogurt, eggnog, soy milk	Discard
	Butter, margarine	Safe
	Baby formula, opened	Discard
<b>EGGS</b>	Fresh eggs, hard-cooked in shell, egg dishes, egg products	Discard
	Custards, puddings, quiche	Discard
<b>FRUITS</b>	Fresh fruits, cut	Discard
	Fruit juices, opened	Safe
	Canned fruits, opened	Safe
	Fresh fruits, coconut, raisins, dried fruits, candied fruits, dates	Safe

## DISCARD TIMES FOR REFRIGERATED FOODS AFTER POWER OUTAGE

(cont'd.)

Food Categories	Specific Foods	Held above 40°F for over 2 Hours
<b>SAUCES, SPREADS, JAMS</b>	Opened mayonnaise, tartar sauce, horseradish	Discard if above 50°F for over 8 hours
	Peanut butter	Safe
	Jelly, relish, taco sauce, mustard, ketchup, olives, pickles	Safe
	Worcestershire, soy, barbecue, hoisin sauces	Safe
	Fish sauces, oyster sauce	Discard
	Opened vinegar-based dressings	Safe
	Opened creamy-based dressings	Discard
	Spaghetti sauce, opened jar	Discard
<b>BREADS, CAKES, COOKIES, PASTA, GRAINS</b>	Breads, rolls, cakes, muffins, quick breads, tortillas	Safe
	Refrigerator biscuits, rolls, cookie dough	Discard
	Cooked pasta, rice, potatoes	Discard
	Pasta salads with mayonnaise or vinaigrette	Discard
	Fresh pasta	Discard
	Cheesecake	Discard
	Breakfast foods—waffles, pancakes, bagels	Safe
<b>PIES, PASTRIES</b>	Pastries, cream-filled	Discard
	Pies—custard- or cheese-filled, or chiffon; quiche	Discard
	Pies, fruit	Safe
<b>VEGETABLES</b>	Fresh mushrooms, herbs, spices	Safe
	Greens, pre-cut, pre-washed, packaged	Discard
	Vegetables, raw	Safe
	Vegetables, cooked; tofu	Discard
	Vegetable juice, opened	Discard
	Baked potatoes	Discard
	Commercial garlic in oil	Discard
	Potato salad	Discard
	Casseroles, soups, stews	Discard

Thawed or partially thawed food in the freezer may be safely refrozen if it still contains ice crystals or is at 40°F or below. Partial thawing and refreezing may affect the quality of some food, but the food will be safe to eat. If you keep an appliance thermometer in your freezer, it's easy to tell whether food is safe. When the power comes back on, check the thermometer. If it reads 40°F or below, the food is safe and can be refrozen. Otherwise discard it.

## DISCARD TIMES FOR FROZEN FOODS AFTER POWER OUTAGE

*Adapted from [foodsafety.gov](http://foodsafety.gov).*

Food Categories	Specific Foods	Still Contains Ice Crystals and Feels as Cold as if Refrigerated	Held above 40°F for over 2 Hours
<b>MEATS, POULTRY, SEAFOOD</b>	Beef, veal, lamb, pork, ground meats	Refreeze	Discard
	Poultry, ground poultry	Refreeze	Discard
	Variety meats (liver, kidney, heart, chitterlings)	Refreeze	Discard
	Casseroles, stews, soups	Refreeze	Discard
	Fish, shellfish, breaded seafood products	Refreeze, though there will be some texture and flavor loss	Discard
<b>DAIRY</b>	Milk	Refreeze; may lose some texture	Discard
	Eggs (out of shell) and egg products	Refreeze	Discard
	Ice cream, frozen yogurt	Discard	Discard
	Cheese (soft and semi-soft)	Refreeze; may lose some texture	Discard
	Hard cheeses	Refreeze	Refreeze
	Shredded cheeses	Refreeze	Discard
	Casseroles containing milk, cream, eggs, soft cheeses	Refreeze	Discard
Cheesecake	Refreeze	Discard	
<b>FRUITS</b>	Juices	Refreeze	Refreeze; discard if mold, yeasty smell, or sliminess develops
	Home or commercially packaged	Refreeze; will change texture and flavor	Refreeze; discard if mold, yeasty smell, or sliminess develops
<b>VEGETABLES</b>	Juices	Refreeze	Discard after held above 40°F for 6 hours
	Home or commercially packaged or blanched	Refreeze; may suffer texture and flavor loss	Discard after held above 40°F for 6 hours
<b>BREADS, PASTRIES</b>	Breads, rolls, muffins, cakes (without custard fillings)	Refreeze	Refreeze
	Cakes, pies, pastries with custard or cheese filling	Refreeze	Discard
	Pie crusts, commercial and homemade bread dough	Refreeze; some quality loss may occur	Refreeze; quality loss is considerable
<b>OTHER</b>	Casseroles, pasta- or rice-based	Refreeze	Discard
	Flour, cornmeal, nuts	Refreeze	Refreeze
	Breakfast items--waffles, pancakes, bagels	Refreeze	Refreeze
	Frozen meals, entrées, specialty items (pizzas, sausage and biscuit sandwiches, meat pies, convenience foods)	Refreeze	Discard