



Shasta County Department of Resource Management
Environmental Health Division
1855 Placer Street, Suite 201, Redding, CA 96001
Phone: 530/225-5787 • Fax: 530/225-5413
www.co.shasta.ca.us

FOOD SAFETY DURING TEMPORARY POWER OUTAGES

- PRIVATE HOMES -

This Food Safety Notice is being issued by the Shasta County Environmental Health Division to provide guidance to private residences that have lost electricity for longer than two hours due to rolling blackouts. If you were evacuated, there is no way to know how long the power was out. Evacuees must assume that all perishable food has been compromised and must be discarded.

Appropriate decision-making before, during, and immediately after power outages is necessary to protect consumers from unsafe food and minimize product loss. The food items of concern are those that are potentially hazardous foods (PHF). Generally, PHF are moist, perishable foods that will allow bacteria to grow easily during the time when the food is held in the temperature danger zone (41°F to 135°F).

WHEN THERE IS A POWER OUTAGE

- Note the time at which the power outage begins.
- Discard food products that are in the process of being cooked, but which have not yet reached the final temperature.

Actions That Can Keep Food Safe for Several Hours

Cold Potentially Hazardous Foods

- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible
- If practical, group packages of cold food together to reduce heat gain

*Caution: The use of dry ice may result in unsafe build-up of CO₂ (Carbon Dioxide) producing an asphyxiation danger.

Hot Potentially Hazardous Foods

- Do not place hot foods in refrigerators or freezers
- Use ice and/or ice baths to rapidly cool small batches of hot food

Discontinue Food Preparation If Any of the Following Conditions Exist

- Lack of sufficient light in food preparation areas to allow for safe food preparation and cleaning and sanitizing of food contact surfaces.
- No hot water, inadequate water pressure
- Unsafe food temperatures (see tables on Page 2)

WHEN THE POWER IS RESTORED

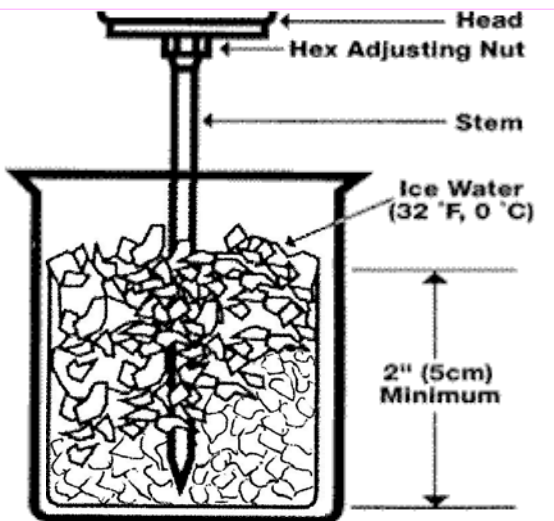
- Identify PHF that may have been in the temperature danger zone
- Check the internal food temperature
- If practical, separate packages of food in refrigeration units and freezers to allow for faster re-cooling

Refrigerated Potentially Hazardous Food

Duration of Power Outage	Potentially Hazardous Food Temperatures		
	45°F or below	46°F to 50°F	50°F or above
0-2 hours	Food can be used, but cool to 41°F if not using immediately	Immediately cool to 41°F or below within 2 hours	Do not use
2-3 hours	Food can be used if cooled to 41°F or below within 2 hours	Immediately cool to 41°F or below within 1 hour	Do not use
3-4 hours	Food can be used if cooled to 41°F or below within 2 hours	Do not use	Do not use
beyond 4 hours	Do not use	Do not use	Do not use

When In Doubt, Throw It Out!!

Don't Forget to Calibrate Your Thermometer!



The USDA offers these instructions for calibrating a stem thermometer with a hex nut under the dial. Ice Water. To use the ice water method, fill a large glass with finely crushed ice. Add clean tap water to the top of the ice and stir well. Immerse the food thermometer stem a minimum of 2 inches into the mixture without touching the sides or bottom of the glass. Wait a minimum of 30 seconds before adjusting to 32°. If you have a stem thermometer that is not adjustable and it is off by more than 2°F, discard and purchase a new thermometer.

Questions or additional information?

Contact Shasta County Environmental Health Division staff at (530) 225-5787 during normal working hours, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.