



Power outages can be very frustrating and troublesome, especially when they are prolonged.

SAFETY AFTER THE STORM

- If a power line has fallen on the car you are in, remain in the car until help arrives. Do not attempt to pull away. A cellular phone may be used to call 911 for help.
- Stay clear of all fallen tree limbs and electrical wires as well as anything they are touching - such as puddles and metal fences.
- Notify local fire, police, and electric utility officials about downed power lines.
- Do not enter damaged buildings with flame lanterns, candles or lighted cigarettes because there may be gas leaks.
- If possible, stay off the road. If you have to drive, watch out for trees and wires in the roadway. Do not drive across a downed power line. Treat all non-working traffic lights as stop signs and proceed cautiously at intersections.
- Try to keep people and traffic away from downed power lines until officials arrive.

SAVING YOUR PERISHABLE FOOD

Perishable food should not be held above 40 degrees Fahrenheit for more than 2 hours. If a power outage is 2 hours or less, you need not be concerned, but how do you save your food when the refrigerator is out for longer times? Being prepared can help. By planning ahead, you can save your perishables.

Power Outages

ALWAYS consider all downed wires energized and Dangerous!

Stay alert – don't get hurt.

First – Stay safe. Keep yourself and others away.

Second – Call 9-1-1 immediately (your local emergency services can contact NSTAR directly).

Or, report the location to NSTAR at 1-800-592-2000.

What do I need?

- Coolers.** Inexpensive styrofoam coolers can do an excellent job as well.
- Ice.** Surrounding your food with ice in a cooler will ensure that it will stay cold.
- Shelf-stable foods** – such as canned goods and powdered or boxed milk – can be eaten cold or heated on the grill.
- A digital quick-response thermometer** can quickly tell you the internal temperatures of food for doneness and safety.

What to do?

Do not open the refrigerator or freezer. An unopened door will keep food cold enough for a couple of hours at least. A freezer that is half full will hold adequate temperature for up to 24 hours and a full freezer for 48 hours.

If it looks like the power outage will be for more than 2-4 hours, pack all refrigerated milk, dairy, meats, fish, eggs, etc. in your cooler surrounded by ice.

If it looks like the power outage will be prolonged, prepare a cooler with ice for your freezer items.

Frequently Asked Questions:

- **What if I go to bed and the power is still not on?**
Before you go to bed, pack your perishable into your coolers (if you haven't already done so) and put in as much ice as you can. Also, leave a bedroom light switched on. When the power goes back on, it may wake you and you check the condition of things and return items to the refrigerator or freezer.
- **What food should be discarded after a power outage?**
As soon as the power returns, **check temperatures.** If the food in the freezer has ice crystals and is not above 40 degrees, you can refreeze. If your freezer is fairly full and you know it was not longer than 24 hours, the food should be okay. There will be a loss of quality with refreezing, but the food will be safe. Perishable foods in the refrigerator should not be above 40 degrees for more than two hours.

Sources:

American Red Cross Publication #1098; NSTAR Community Relations Department.

