

Power Outages at Food Facilities

If your facility has had a power outage, ALL refrigerated and frozen food will need to be assessed. During regular operating conditions, potentially hazardous food should be stored at 4° Celsius or less to prevent growth of bacteria and spoilage. However, during a power outage, cooling units cannot maintain this temperature indefinitely. Potentially hazardous food that has reached a temperature above 4° Celsius for 2 hours or more will need to be discarded.

You must monitor temperatures using thermometers and determine how long your power outage lasted:

- Refrigerated foods must be at 4° Celsius or less and frozen food must be at -18° Celsius or less.
- A full chest freezer will keep food frozen for up to 2 days.
- A half-full chest freezer will keep food frozen for up to 1 day.
- A cooler or fridge will keep food cold for 4 hours.

If you don't have a thermometer or if you don't know how long your fridge or freezer was without power, check the products in the fridge for spoilage and souring. Look for:

- Milk and other dairy products that have spoiled/become sour. Spoiled dairy products are a good indicator that the fridge has been off and all food should be discarded.
- Ice cream that has thawed and refrozen is a good indicator that the freezer has been off.
- Fish product that smells bad upon thawing is also a sign that food in your freezer has thawed and refrozen.
- Frozen foods that have thawed must be discarded as they may no longer be safe to eat. Once thawed, food should not be refrozen.
- Food in the freezer that has (or may have) reached above 4° Celsius should be discarded and must not be refrozen.

If food has been lost as a result of a power outage, operators may wish to contact their insurance company to determine if it is covered. Make a list of items discarded and photograph those items (if possible) for insurance purposes.

**IF IN DOUBT,
THROW IT OUT**

Please check the [Interior Health](https://www.interiorhealth.ca/health-and-wellness/natural-disasters-and-emergencies) (https://www.interiorhealth.ca/health-and-wellness/natural-disasters-and-emergencies) website for more Emergency Information.

If you have questions contact your [Environmental Health Officer](#).