

## Power Outages at Food Facilities

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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 of 4° Celsius will need to be discarded.

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

- Refrigerated foods must be under 4° Celsius 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 4° Celsius or warmer 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](#) website for more Emergency Information.

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