



Ventura County Environmental Health Division  
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Internet Web Site Address: [www.vcrma.org/divisions/environmental-health](http://www.vcrma.org/divisions/environmental-health)

## **FOOD SAFETY IN FOOD FACILITIES RELATED TO A POWER OUTAGE**

The Ventura County Environmental Health Division (Division) has the following information for your food facility regarding food safety in the event of a power outage:

If you have advance warning of a power outage, move food products from smaller refrigerators, such as reach-ins and cook's line units, to walk-ins. If the outage is anticipated to last more than 4 hours, move foods that must be refrigerated to the freezer as space will allow. When the power goes out you can make the food last longer by keeping the doors to the freezer unit and walk-in closed as much as possible. If the power is off for more than 6 hours, in order to maintain potentially hazardous foods at 41°F or below, dry ice, block ice, or bags of ice may be used in the freezer and walk-in, food may be relocated to a commercial freezer, or you may secure a generator or refrigerated truck for emergency power. Also be aware that you cannot touch dry ice with your hands and you should not breathe the fumes, so follow handling directions carefully.

Without power, a full freezer will keep everything frozen for about 2 days. A half-full freezer will keep food frozen 1 day. If the freezer is not full, quickly group packages together so they will retain the cold more effectively. Separate meat and poultry items from other foods so if they begin to thaw, their juices will not drip on to other foods. Discard any thawed food that has risen to room temperature and remained there 2 hours or more.

If products were at room temperature or above when the power went out, they should be rapidly cooled to 41°F using an ice bath prior to placing in any walk-in unit. If the food has not reached 41°F within 6 hours it must be discarded. Do not place unrefrigerated foods in the walk-in once the power has gone out.

### **When in doubt, throw it out!**

Prior to resuming food preparation, all potentially hazardous foods must be evaluated for proper temperatures. Bacteria can multiply rapidly on potentially hazardous foods that have been at room temperature for more than 2 hours. Discard any foods that have been contaminated by raw

meat juices and immediately discard anything with a strange color or odor.

Discard the following potentially hazardous foods if kept above refrigerator temperature (41°F) for more than 2 hours:

- ✓ raw or cooked meat, poultry, or seafood
- ✓ milk/cream, yogurt, soft cheese
- ✓ cooked pasta, pasta salads
- ✓ custard, chiffon, or cheese pies
- ✓ fresh eggs, egg substitutes
- ✓ meat or cheese-topped pizza, luncheon meats
- ✓ casseroles, stew, or soups
- ✓ mayonnaise, tartar sauce, and creamy dressings
- ✓ refrigerated cookie doughs
- ✓ cream-filled pastries

Any foods stored in undercounter or smaller reach-in refrigerator units should be thrown out. Any foods that were prepared prior to the power outage that were not rapidly cooled should be discarded. Thawed foods that are at 41°F or below must be used immediately, **do not refreeze thawed foods.**

### Cooking temperatures

The following foods must be cooked to minimum internal temperatures to ensure food safety:

FOOD	A MINIMUM INTERNAL TEMPERATURE
Whole Cut Beef/Fish/Pork	145°F or above for 15 seconds
Eggs	145°F or above for 15 seconds
Ground / Flaked Meats	155°F or above for 15 seconds
Poultry and Stuffed Fish/Meats	165°F or above for 15 seconds

If you have any questions regarding this information or regarding food safety, call the Environmental Health Division from 8 AM to 5 PM, Monday through Friday at 805/654-2813.