

Refrigerated Food and Power Outages: When to Save and When to Throw Out

Adapted from [Keeping Food Safe During an Emergency](#) (USDA).

Is food in the refrigerator safe during a power outage? It should be safe as long as power is out **no more than 4 hours**. Keep the door closed as much as possible. Discard any perishable food (such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and leftovers) that have been above 40 °F for over 2 hours.

Never taste food to determine its safety! You can't rely on appearance or odor to determine whether food is safe.

Note: Always discard any items in the refrigerator that have come into contact with raw meat juices.

You will have to evaluate each item separately. Use this chart as a guide.

Food Categories	Specific Foods	Held above 40 °F for over 2 hours
MEAT, POULTRY, SEAFOOD	Raw or leftover cooked meat, poultry, fish, or seafood; soy meat substitutes	Discard
	Thawing meat or poultry	Discard
	Salads: Meat, tuna, shrimp, chicken, or egg salad	Discard
	Gravy, stuffing, broth	Discard
	Lunchmeats, hot dogs, bacon, sausage, dried beef	Discard
	Pizza – with any topping	Discard
	Canned hams labeled "Keep Refrigerated"	Discard
	Canned meats and fish, opened	Discard
	Casseroles, soups, stews	Discard
	CHEESE	Soft Cheeses: blue/bleu, Roquefort, Brie, Camembert, cottage, cream, Edam, Monterey Jack, ricotta, mozzarella, Muenster, Neufchatel, queso blanco, queso fresco
Hard Cheeses: Cheddar, Colby, Swiss, Parmesan, provolone, Romano		Safe
Processed Cheeses		Safe
Shredded Cheeses		Discard
Low-fat Cheeses		Discard
Grated Parmesan, Romano, or combination (in can or jar)		Safe
DAIRY	Milk, cream, sour cream, buttermilk, evaporated milk, yogurt, eggnog, soy milk	Discard
	Butter, margarine	Safe
	Baby formula, opened	Discard

Food Categories	Specific Foods	Held above 40 °F for over 2 hours
EGGS	Fresh eggs, hard-cooked in shell, egg dishes, egg products	Discard
	Custards and puddings, quiche	Discard
FRUITS	Fresh fruits, cut	Discard
	Fruit juices, opened	Safe
	Canned fruits, opened	Safe
	Fresh fruits, coconut, raisins, dried fruits, candied fruits, dates	Safe
SAUCES, SPREADS, JAMS	Opened mayonnaise, tartar sauce, horseradish	Discard if above 50 °F for over 8 hrs.
	Peanut butter	Safe
	Jelly, relish, taco sauce, mustard, catsup, olives, pickles	Safe
	Worcestershire, soy, barbecue, hoisin sauces	Safe
	Fish sauces, oyster sauce	Discard
	Opened vinegar-based dressings	Safe
	Opened creamy-based dressings	Discard
	Spaghetti sauce, opened jar	Discard
BREAD, CAKES, COOKIES, PASTA, GRAINS	Bread, rolls, cakes, muffins, quick breads, tortillas	Safe
	Refrigerator biscuits, rolls, cookie dough	Discard
	Cooked pasta, rice, potatoes	Discard
	Pasta salads with mayonnaise or vinaigrette	Discard
	Fresh pasta	Discard
	Cheesecake	Discard
	Breakfast foods –waffles, pancakes, bagels	Safe
PIES, PASTRY	Pastries, cream filled	Discard
	Pies – custard, cheese filled, or chiffon; quiche	Discard
	Pies, fruit	Safe
VEGETABLES	Fresh mushrooms, herbs, spices	Safe
	Greens, pre-cut, pre-washed, packaged	Discard
	Vegetables, raw	Safe
	Vegetables, cooked; tofu	Discard
	Vegetable juice, opened	Discard
	Baked potatoes	Discard
	Commercial garlic in oil	Discard
	Potato salad	Discard
	Casseroles, soups, stews	Discard