

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

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

Thawed or partially thawed food in the freezer may be safely refrozen if it still contains ice crystals or is at 40 °F or below. Partial thawing and refreezing may affect the **quality** of some food, but the food will be **safe to eat**.

If you keep an appliance thermometer in your freezer, it's easy to tell whether food is safe. When the power comes back on, check the thermometer. If it reads 40 °F or below, the food is safe and can be refrozen.

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 freezer 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	Still contains ice crystals and feels as cold as if refrigerated	Thawed and held above 40 °F for over 2 hours
MEAT, POULTRY, SEAFOOD	Beef, veal, lamb, pork, and ground meats	Refreeze	Discard
	Poultry and ground poultry	Refreeze	Discard
	Variety meats (liver, kidney, heart, chitterlings)	Refreeze	Discard
	Casseroles, stews, soups	Refreeze	Discard
	Fish, shellfish, breaded seafood products	Refreeze. However, there will be some texture and flavor loss.	Discard
DAIRY	Milk	Refreeze. May lose some texture.	Discard
	Eggs (out of shell) and egg products	Refreeze	Discard

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	Ice cream, frozen yogurt	Discard	Discard
	Cheese (soft and semi-soft)	Refreeze. May lose some texture.	Discard
	Hard cheeses	Refreeze	Refreeze
	Shredded cheeses	Refreeze	Discard
	Casseroles containing milk, cream, eggs, soft cheeses	Refreeze	Discard
	Cheesecake	Refreeze	Discard
FRUITS	Juices	Refreeze	Refreeze. Discard if mold, yeasty smell, or sliminess develops.
	Home or commercially packaged	Refreeze. Will change texture and flavor.	Refreeze. Discard if mold, yeasty smell, or sliminess develops.
VEGETABLES	Juices	Refreeze	Discard after held above 40 °F for 6 hours.
	Home or commercially packaged or blanched	Refreeze. May suffer texture and flavor loss.	Discard after held above 40 °F for 6 hours.
BREADS, PASTRIES	Breads, rolls, muffins, cakes (without custard fillings)	Refreeze	Refreeze
	Cakes, pies, pastries with custard or cheese	Refreeze	Discard

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filling

Pie crusts, commercial and homemade bread dough

Refreeze. Some quality loss may occur.

Refreeze. Quality loss is considerable.

OTHER	Casseroles – pasta, rice based	Refreeze	Discard
	Flour, cornmeal, nuts	Refreeze	Refreeze
	Breakfast items – waffles, pancakes, bagels	Refreeze	Refreeze
	Frozen meal, entree, specialty items (pizza, sausage and biscuit, meat pie, convenience foods)	Refreeze	Discard