

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,

Food Categories	Specific Foods	Held above 40 °F for over 2 hours
	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

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

Food Categories	Specific Foods	Held above 40 °F for over 2 hours
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

Food Categories	Specific Foods	Held above 40 °F for over 2 hours
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