



MARINETTE COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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FOOD SAFETY DURING AND AFTER POWER OUTAGES

[Peshtigo, WI] –Severe thunderstorms and damaging winds this weekend incurred numerous power outages throughout Northeast Wisconsin. Power company personnel are working to restore power; however, there are power outages across a large portion of central and northern Wisconsin. Electrical service may not be restored for several days. Marinette County Emergency Management in conjunction with Marinette County Public Health wants you to know the following about food safety during and after power outages.

Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to maintain the cold temperature. Buy dry or block ice to keep the refrigerator/freezer as cold as possible. Fifty pounds of dry ice should hold an 18-cubic foot fully-stocked freezer cold for two days. The refrigerator will keep food cold for about 4 hours if it is unopened. A full freezer will keep the temperature for approximately 48 hours (24 hours if it is half full) if the door remains closed.

If you plan to eat refrigerated or frozen meat, poultry, fish, or eggs while it is still at safe temperatures, it's important that each item is thoroughly cooked to the proper temperature to assure that any foodborne bacteria that may be present is destroyed. However, if at any point the food was above 40 °F for 2 hours or more discard it.

For infants, try to use prepared, canned baby formula that requires no added water. When preparing concentrated or powdered formulas, use bottled water if the local water source is potentially contaminated. Wash fruits and vegetables with water from a safe source before eating.

Once power is restored you'll need to determine the safety of your food.

- If an appliance thermometer was kept in the freezer, check the temperature when the power comes back on. If the freezer thermometer reads 40°F or below, the food is safe and may be refrozen.
- If a thermometer has not been kept in the freezer, check each package of food to determine its safety. You can't rely on appearance or odor. If the food still contains ice crystals or is 40 °F or below, it is safe to refreeze or cook.
- Refrigerated food should be safe as long as the power was out for **no more than 4 hours** and the refrigerator door was kept shut. Discard any perishable food (such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs, or leftovers) that has been above 40°F for two hours or more.

Keep in mind that perishable food such as meat, poultry, seafood, milk, and eggs that are not kept adequately refrigerated or frozen may cause illness if consumed, even when they are thoroughly cooked. If in doubt, throw it out. To learn more about food safety visit <https://www.foodsafety.gov/>.

**Guidelines provided by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).*

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