

Emergency Food Safety

This playbook provides a guide on how to store food safely and prepare meals during emergencies such as power outages. It ensures the maintenance of food quality and prevention of foodborne illnesses when normal food preparation options are unavailable.

Step 1: **Assess situation**

Evaluate your power outage duration and the potential for an extended emergency. Determine if you have access to alternative cooking sources (e.g., outdoor grill, wood stove).

Step 2: **Keep cold**

Refrigerate perishable food within 2 hours. During a power outage, keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed and use a thermometer to track the temperatures to ensure they stay at 40°F or below for the fridge and 0°F or below for the freezer.

Step 3: **Prepare safely**

Wash hands and surfaces often using bottled or boiled water. Avoid cross-contamination by keeping raw meat and poultry separate from ready-to-eat foods.

Step 4: **Use alternatives**

Utilize alternative cooking methods such as a grill or camp stove outdoors, but never use these devices inside due to the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Step 5: **Storing properly**

Store food on shelves that will be safely out of the way of contaminated water in case of floods. Use waterproof containers to keep food dry and away from contaminants.

Step 6: **Consume safely**

Consume perishables and refrigerated items first, followed by frozen items, and lastly non-perishables. Always prioritize food safety—if in doubt, throw it out.

General Notes

Food temperatures

Remember that perishable food left at room temperature too long may contain bacteria or toxins that cannot be destroyed by cooking. Discard any food that has been exposed to temperatures over 40°F for 2 hours or more.

Emergency supplies

Keep a supply of shelf-stable foods, pet supplies, baby formula, and bottled water stored in a dry and cool place in case of an emergency.