

Food Safety & Disposal Due to Power Outage

During a power failure it is important to consider the safety of all foods. A power outage can result in certain foods becoming potentially hazardous for consumption because foods cannot be maintained at 4 C (40 F) or less.

Ontario Food Premises (Ont. Reg. 562/90) defines hazardous foods as “foods that are capable of supporting the growth of pathogenic organisms or the production of toxins of such organisms”.

The Health Protection and Promotion Act provides the authority for a medical officer of health or public health inspector to take actions needed to decrease or eliminate a health hazard. These actions can include requiring the cleaning or disinfecting, or the destruction of materials, or prohibiting the storage, handling, display or sale of any food. As a food operator you are required to comply with the following directions.

Refrigerated Foods:

All hazardous foods (meat, poultry, dairy, fish and eggs) that has been stored above 4 C (40 F) for more than 2 hours must be discarded due to the increased risk of the growth of organisms that can cause foodborne illness. *Ontario Food Premises (Ont. Reg.562/90) Section 33A.*

Food to discard:

- Raw or cooked meat products that include:
 - ✓ cold cuts, poultry and poultry products
 - ✓ fish and seafood
 - ✓ milk and milk products, including yogurt and soft cheese
 - ✓ casseroles, stews, soups
 - ✓ salads such as pasta, potato, and rice

Frozen Foods:

All hazardous foods must be stored -18 C (0 F) or colder. *Ontario Food Premises (Ont. Reg. 562/90) Section 35.*

- Discard thawed vegetables, fish, shellfish, ice cream and frozen foods because bacteria multiply rapidly in these foods.
- Partially thawed foods that still contain ice crystals can be safely refrozen. However partial thawing and refreezing reduces the quality of most foods.
- Fruits that still look and smell good may be refrozen.

Cross Contamination

- Due to the potential for cross-contamination from spoiled foods onto storage racks/shelves, all refrigerated and freezer units must be disinfected by use of an effective sanitizer.
- All food contact surfaces must be cleaned and sanitized prior to reuse.
- A basic sanitizing solution of chlorine and water is 2 tablespoons of 5.25% chlorine bleach for every 13 litres of water. Be sure that there is a minimum contact time of 45 seconds.
- Prior to restocking refrigerated and freezer units please be sure that they are operated at appropriate temperatures.

For more information call Health Connection to speak with a public health inspector at 721-7520 (1877 721-7520) or visit our website www.smdhu.org