

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 |
| | Ice cream, frozen yogurt | Discard | Discard |
| | Cheese (soft and semi-soft) | Refreeze. May lose some | Discard |

| 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 |
|-------------------------|--|--|---|
| | | texture. | |
| | 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 filling | Refreeze | Discard |
| | 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 |

| 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 |
|-----------------|----------------|--|--|
|-----------------|----------------|--|--|

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

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, Muenster, Neufchatel, queso blanco, queso fresco |

| Food Categories | Specific Foods | Held above 40 °F for over 2 hours |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| | 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 |
| SAUCES, SPREADS, JAMS | Opened mayonnaise, tartar sauce, horseradish | Discard if above 50 °F for over 8 hrs. |

| Food Categories | Specific Foods | Held above 40 °F for over 2 hours |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|
| | 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 |
| PIES, PASTRY | Pastries, cream filled | Discard |
| | Pies – custard, cheese filled, or chiffon; quiche | Discard |

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