

FOOD SAFETY DURING POWER OUTAGES

Have an action plan and train your staff. Here are some options:

- Consider pre-arranging with a refrigerated truck company to keep foods cold or renting a generator to supply electricity for your walk-in cooler/freezer.
- Arrange with another establishment to hold your food in their walk-in, provided they have power. Do not store foods in private homes.
- Group frozen foods closely together as a typical practice—foods may stay cooler for a longer time.
- Know where to buy dry ice or block ice to help keep food cold when the power is out.
- Have the number for United Illuminating handy so you can find out about power outage status.

If power is out, your restaurant will be closed. If the power is out for 4 or more hours, your establishment must remain closed until it can be inspected by the Stratford Health Department.

Call Police Dispatch 203-380-1857 to report your power outage. Dispatch will notify the Health Department. When power is restored, call Dispatch! They will notify the on-call staff with the Health Department for a re-opening inspection.

When there is a power outage:

- Note the time the power outage begins.
- Discontinue all cooking operations.
- Do not place hot food in refrigerators or freezers—this will raise the temperature inside the refrigerator or freezer and may make more food unusable.
- Discard food products that are in the process of being cooked, but which have not yet reached final cooking temperature.
- Maintain hot potentially hazardous foods¹ at 140° or above. Food that has reached final cooking temperatures may be kept hot (140°) by using canned heat in chafing dishes.
- Use ice or ice baths to rapidly cool small batches of hot food.
- Leave freezer door closed to preserve still-cold foods.

If you are out of power for more than 4 hours, then potentially hazardous food may have to be discarded. Begin inventorying of affected foods for insurance claims purposes. The Health Department can assist in this process. Here some *guidelines*:

DISCARD: meat, poultry, fish, eggs & egg substitutes—raw or cooked; dairy products, including butter; casseroles, stews, soups; lunch meats, hot dogs; cream-based foods made on-site; custards, cheese pies; cookie dough made with eggs; cut melons; cooked vegetables.

SAVE: margarine; hard & processed cheeses; fresh uncut fruits & veggies; opened jars of vinegar-based salad dressings; fruit juices; fresh herbs & spices; fruit pies, breads, rolls & muffins; cakes (except cream cheese frosting or cream-filled).

¹ Potentially hazardous foods (e.g. meat, eggs, dairy & cooked vegetables) can support rapid & progressive growth of disease-causing bacteria & viruses. Food-borne illnesses can be caused by bacteria that can multiply when food is held in the temperature DANGER zone (45° – 140°).