

## **Power outage - Guidelines for potentially hazardous foods:**

Be prepared before the power goes out: Keep thermometers inside all refrigeration units and freezers. Know where you can get dry ice or block ice. Have coolers on hand to keep refrigerated food cold if the power will be out for more than four hours. Make a plan to have access to a refrigerated truck if you have large amounts of food.

- Close the facility, cease all food preparation and note the time the power went out.
- Keep all refrigerator and freezer doors closed (a refrigerator will keep food cold for about 4 hours if the door is kept closed / a freezer will hold temperature for about 24-48 hours). If power is expected to be out 4 hours or more you may want to place refrigerated items into coolers full of ice until the power is restored
- Cover all cold and hot food products on buffet lines or steam tables.
- Discard any perishable foods such as meat, poultry, seafood, milk, eggs etc.. that have been above 41°F for two hours or more (*You cannot rely on appearance or odor to determine if its is safe!*).
- If a thermometer has not been kept in the freezer, **check each package** of food to determine its safety. If the food **still contains ice crystals** or is 41° F or below, it is safe to refreeze or cook.
- To discourage pilferage of unsafe food products, open packages and pour bleach on discarded products.
- Wash, rinse and sanitize all surfaces that have come in contact with unsafe food products.
- If you have returned from being evacuated and are not sure if the power was shut off and then turned back on, check with your utility company.
- *When in doubt, throw it out!*