



Guidelines for Food Service and Retail Food Establishments During Power Outages

During extended periods of power loss, safe storage of potentially hazardous foods is critical. Extended power outages, which are those lasting 4 hours or more, create an environment where facilities have difficulty operating within the parameters of Kentucky's Retail Food Code, especially maintaining proper temperature of hot and cold food products.

If your facility is without power, and you are unable to make alternate arrangements for the proper storage of potentially hazardous food products, the following guidelines are to assist you in preventing temperature-abused products from reaching your customers.

- Cease operations and note the time the outage occurred, and for how long.
- Close refrigeration and freezer units, including sandwich and salad prep units.
- Cover all cold and hot food products on buffet lines or steam tables.
- Monitor and record the temperatures of all potentially hazardous food products.
- Discard any potentially hazardous products that have been in the temperature danger zone (above 41°F or below 135°F) for more than two hours.
- Frozen foods that have thawed but are below 41°F (ice crystals still present) can be used or refrozen.
- To discourage pilferage of discarded products, pour liquid bleach or soap over items.
- Keep an inventory of all discarded products for health department review.
- Check to see if the water supply was comprised. Follow *Water Emergency Guidelines*, if necessary.
- Wash, rinse and sanitize all surfaces that have come in contact with unsafe food products.
- Purchase fresh food after power is restored and equipment is operating properly. Have receipts or invoices available for health department review.

You are responsible for maintaining food products in a wholesome condition, thereby reducing the chances of a food-borne illness for your customers. By adhering to the guidelines listed above, you can prevent serious illnesses from occurring during extended periods of power loss.

Please report extended power outages, those lasting 4 hours or more, to the Northern Kentucky Health Department.

If you have any questions or to report a power outage at a food service establishment, please call 859-341-4151.