

Food Salvage Guidelines Following a Power Outage, Flooding or Fire

The following information serves only as guidelines. Please contact the LCGHD for specific instructions.

Freezer

- Without power, a freezer operating in good repair and fully stocked will keep food frozen for approximately two days. A half-full freezer will generally keep food for only one day.
- Leaving the freezer closed will make food last as long as possible.
- When the power returns, it is generally safe to refreeze foods that still contain ice crystals.
- If product has thawed but has not exceeded 41°F, transfer product to a working cooler and treat as refrigerated food. Do not refreeze foods once they have thawed.
- When checking food temperatures, remember that foods generally thaw from the outside in, so the warmest part of the food will be on the outside or surface of the product.

Refrigerator

- Provided it is kept closed, a refrigerator or cooler will usually keep food cool for 4-6 hours without power, depending on the kitchen temperature.
- Once power has been restored, check the temperature of food in each unit. Do not open the cooler door any more than necessary until proper cooling temperatures are reached.
- If food is warmer than 41° F for more than 4 hours, it should be discarded.
- Do not place hot food in coolers in attempt to save them. This will raise the temperature of your cooler and cause more waste.

If time and temperature have not been monitored and documented, or are uncertain, it is necessary to discard the food.

Cans, Bottles and Jars

Bottles and jars cannot be salvaged if exposed to fire, chemicals, or flood water. Screw on lids and caps cannot be properly cleaned, so they must be discarded. However, unopened cans that have not been exposed to extreme heat and show no sign of physical damage can be salvaged through the process below:

- Remove paper label
- Wash with soap and rinse with water
- Sanitize with approved sanitizer at recommended concentration
- Air dry and re-label with a marker

Use of a Refrigerated Truck

Refrigerated trucks may be rented for food storage. Neighboring food businesses may have the potential to share one truck and divide costs. Make sure the truck has been appropriately cleaned for food storage and package food securely before storing.

Use of Dry Ice

If you have prior notice of a power outage or it appears that your freezer will be off longer than a day, dry ice can be used to keep foods cold. As a guideline, 25 pounds of dry ice for every 10 cubic feet of freezer storage capacity should keep the food in half full freezer frozen for 2 to 3 days. The same ratio of dry ice to freezer capacity in a fully loaded freezer can keep food frozen for 3 to 4 days. When handling dry ice, avoid breathing fumes and be sure to wear insulated gloves to prevent burns. Place heavy cardboard directly on the packages of frozen food, then place dry ice on the cardboard.

REV1: 2/25/2022

Lake County
General Health District



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

OUR VISION

Lake County citizens enjoy continually improving health and quality of life. Healthy, happy, productive workforce which provides quality health services.

OUR MISSION

Working to prevent disease, promote health, and protect our community.



5966 Heisley Road
Mentor, Ohio 44060
440.350.2543
www.lcghd.org

Retail Food Establishment Food Service Operation

Planning for Unexpected Emergencies

Fire Flooding Power Outage Food Salvage Water Emergency



**Lake County
General Health District**
Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Planning and Preparation BEFORE an Emergency

- Develop a written operational plan for your business and discuss with staff.
- Contact your insurance agent for recommendations.
- Maintain your structure in a clean and safe condition.
- Consider purchasing or leasing generators to operate equipment and lights and/or dry ice or refrigerated trucks to reduce food loss. Make sure you have enough fuel on hand for continued operation and the generator is run outside.
- Make sure that your refrigerators and freezers are in good operational condition.
- Keep flashlights and a battery operated radio with fresh batteries.
- Make sure ice machines and ice bins are full. Bag loose ice and freeze. Having ice on hand may help prevent food loss when the power goes out.

Reopening AFTER an Emergency

DO NOT prepare food until cleared for operation. Call the LCGHD to find out if an inspection is needed before reopening. Before opening you must have:

- A safe and adequate supply of hot and cold drinkable water.
- Electric power and gas service must be provided
- Refrigerators and freezers must be at appropriate temperatures.
- Approved means of sewage and solid waste disposal.
- Discard all spoiled and suspect food.
- Clean and sanitize all areas, especially food contact surfaces.

Flooding and Food Safety

Do not sell or serve any food that may have come into contact with flood water, which may contain silt, raw sewage, oil or chemical waste. Discard any food that is not in an unopened metal can if there is any chance that it has come into contact with flood water.

Food establishments in areas subject to floods should raise equipment and supplies to a higher level or transport to another location. Refrigerators or freezers can be raised by putting cement blocks under their corners. Food and single use products should be moved to a safe and dry area.

Fire

Grease or structural fires and/or fire suppression system releases require a thorough evaluation of all food and single-use supplies and a significant amount of cleaning and sanitizing before any further food handling. Discard food that has been near a fire. Food exposed to fire can be damaged by the heat of the fire, toxic smoke fumes, and chemicals used to fight the fire. Food in cans or jars may appear to be okay, but the heat from a fire can activate food spoilage bacteria. If the heat is extreme, the cans or jars themselves can split or rupture, rendering the food unsafe. Food inside coolers or freezers may be contaminated also through loose seals, gaskets, or air intake.

It is important to contact LCGHD and the local fire department for instructions specific to your circumstances and also when ready for an inspection.

Structural Damage

In the event of high winds or a tornado, the local fire department or building official will advise as to the structural integrity of your building. If you are not sure that the building is safe, the best course of action would be to leave the premises and notify utility companies if service may need to be disconnected. Relocation of salvageable items may be appropriate.

Water Emergency

Unless special approval has been received from LCGHD, **no food business may operate without a safe potable water supply.** An interruption in water service or issuance of a boil order requires quick action. Shut off water if possible. Make sure all equipment connected to the water line (water filters, pop machines, spray misters, coffee/tea makers, ice machines, glass washers, dishwashers, etc.) is flushed, cleaned and sanitized prior to being placed back in service.

If approval has been obtained from the LCGHD for limited operation, purify all water used for drinking, cooking, and for washing eating and cooking utensils. Also disinfect the water used for washing hands, kitchen and bathroom surfaces. Do not use water that is discolored, has an odor, or is visibly dirty.

To disinfect water, use ONE of the following methods:

- Boil at a rolling boil for 1 full minute.
- Add eight (8) drops of liquid chlorine bleach to each gallon of water. Let the water stand at least 30 minutes. Make sure that the bleach has no other active ingredients than 4-6% sodium hypochlorite. Do NOT use scented bleach.

After safe water service has been restored, it is important to flush pipes and faucets, run cold water faucets for several minutes, cycle the water softener once, and disinfect drinking fountains. Then, flush by running water continuously for at least five minutes.

Power Outage

You must have power to operate. Proper lighting is needed to see food preparation, cleaning and dishwashing. Coolers and freezers should be kept closed as much as possible to retain cold air. Accidents could lead to liability issues for employees and guests.