

Food Safety During a Power Outage

OPERATION AND RESPONSE

Steps to take

1. Stop operating immediately if a significant threat or danger to health exists or food safety cannot be assured.
2. Record the start time and length of the power outage.
3. Check and record temperatures of time/temperature control for safety (TCS) food regularly during the power outage.
4. Use your temperature and time record to calculate how long TCS food was in the temperature danger zone.
5. Compare your record to the guidelines for hot and cold holding in the [Conference for Food Protection – Emergency Action Plan for Retail Food Establishments \(PDF\)](#) to determine what to throw away. Contact your inspector for help.

Temperature danger zone

The temperature range at which diseasecausing bacteria grow best in TCS food is called the temperature danger zone.

- Temperature danger zone is between 41°F and 135°F.
- Keep hot food hot and cold food cold. Always use a thermometer to check TCS food temperatures.

Food safety tips

Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed when not checking TCS food temperatures.

Place ice or dry ice in refrigerators and freezers to help keep TCS food at or below 41°F and frozen food in a frozen state.

Do not add hot food to refrigerators or freezers. This will raise the internal air temperature.

Use ice or ice baths to rapidly cool small batches of food.

Use non-power sources of heat, such as chafing dishes with canned heat to maintain hot TCS food at 135°F or above.

Resources

[Conference for Food Protection Emergency Action Plan for Retail Food Establishments \(PDF\)](#)
(<https://www.foodprotect.org/media/guide/Emergency%20Action%20Plan%20for%20Retail%20food%20Est.pdf>)