



# County of Santa Cruz

## Health Services Agency - Environmental Health

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### What to do During Power Outage and Flood

#### Power outage:

- Discontinue all food preparation until power is restored.
- If refrigerator and freezer doors are kept closed, safe food temperatures can be maintained below 41°F (refrigerator cold) for several hours.
- When power is restored, all potentially hazardous food must be temperature checked to determine if it can be consumed.
  - If perishable foods are below 41°F, they may be consumed.
  - Use the chart below to determine what food to keep when food is above 41°F:

length of outage	Internal Temperature of REFRIGERATED Potentially Hazardous Foods (PHF) when power is restored		
	45°F or below	46°F to 50°F	50°F or above
0-2 hours	PHF can be sold	Immediately cool PHF to 41°F or below within 2 hours	PHF cannot be sold
2-3 hours	PHF can be sold, but must be cooled to 41°F or below within 2 hours	Immediately cool PHF to 41°F or below within 1 hour	
4 or more hours	Immediately cool PHF to 41°F or below within 1 hour	PHF cannot be sold	
If food cannot be cooled as specified above, it cannot be sold			
length of outage	Potentially Hazardous Foods (PHF) in HOT HOLDING Units below 135°F when power is restored		
0-2 hours	1. Food may be sold if reheated to 165°F and then held at 135°F or above; OR 2. Food may be sold if cooled to 41°F or below within 2 hours following restoration of power; if food cannot be cooled within 2 hours, it cannot be sold.		
2 or more hours	PHF cannot be sold		

- If generators are not available to maintain power to refrigerators and freezers during an extended power outage, then all potentially hazardous foods must be discarded.
- **WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!**

#### Flooding:

- If possible, use sandbags and move all food items and food storage equipment to higher elevations to prevent water damage.
- Discontinue all food preparation.
- Discard cardboard juice/milk/baby formula boxes and home canned foods if they have come in contact with flood water as they cannot be effectively cleaned and sanitized.

- Discard any non-waterproof food items that may have come into contact with flood water.
  - **Non-waterproof food containers** include those with screw-caps, snap lids, pull tops, and crimped caps.
  - **Waterproof food containers** include undamaged, commercially prepared foods in all-metal cans and “retort pouches” (flexible, shelf-stable juice or seafood pouches).
- **Discard food in damaged cans** which include those cans with swelling, leakage, punctures, holes, fractures, extensive deep rusting, or crushing/denting that is severe enough to prevent normal stacking or opening with a manual, wheel-type can opener.
- **Clean and sanitize** all flood affected areas in the food facility (including salvageable canned foods) as follows:
  1. Use potable water,
  2. Wash with hot soapy water,
  3. Rinse with potable water, and
  4. Sanitize in a solution of 1 tablespoon of unscented, liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of potable water for at least 30 seconds.

### **Boil Water Notice:**

- **If Boil Water Notice is issued**, turn off water to vending machines, beverage dispensers, drinking fountains, produce misting systems, coffee makers and ice machines.
  - Use only bottled water or boiled water for handwashing during cleanup
- **When Boil Water Notice is lifted**, flush lines and sanitize all vending machines, beverage dispensers, drinking fountains, produce misting systems, coffee makers and ice machines.
  - Flush all faucets in restrooms, kitchen, waiter stations and drinking fountains.
  - Clean and sanitize all fixtures, sinks, and equipment connected to water supply lines.
  - Clean and sanitize all dishes, utensils, and work areas.
- Environmental Health inspectors may visit to verify your facility is handling food safely.

**Equipment and structural changes and repairs may require plan review and permitting prior to reinstating service if damage is significant.**