

## Food safety

### Food and power outages

If the power is out for less than 2 hours, then the food in your refrigerator and freezer will be safe to consume. While the power is out, keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to keep food cold for longer.

If the power is out for longer than 2 hours, follow the guidelines below:

- For the Freezer section: A freezer that is half full will hold food safely for up to 24 hours. A full freezer will hold food safely for 48 hours. Do not open the freezer door if you can avoid it.
- For the Refrigerated section: Pack milk, other dairy products, meat, fish, eggs, gravy, and spoilable leftovers into a cooler surrounded by ice. Inexpensive Styrofoam coolers are fine for this purpose.
- Use a food thermometer to check the temperature of your food right before you cook or eat it. Throw away any food that has a temperature of more than 40 degrees Fahrenheit.

### Food safety after flooding

- Do not eat foods that may have come in contact with flood water.
- Keep uncontaminated meat, poultry, fish and eggs refrigerated at or below 40oF.
- Wash and sanitize all contaminated kitchen surfaces, cookware, plates and utensils before preparing food.
- Use sanitizing solution of 1 tablespoon chlorine bleach per gallon of clean water to clean cooking and food preparation surfaces.

Foods that have come into contact with flood water can be contaminated from both bacteria and other hazardous substances. The only flood-damaged foods that are safe to salvage are those in commercially sealed cans.

### Sanitizing Commercially Sealed Cans

- Labels should be removed, as they may be contaminated.
- Cans can be washed in warm water and detergent and sanitized by placing the washed cans in a solution of household bleach made by adding two teaspoons of bleach to each gallon of water.
- Be sure that the water you use for cleaning and sanitizing is safe for drinking purposes.
- Sanitizers work best if they are mixed and used warm or hot. Consider relabeling cans with markable tape or with a permanent marker after cleaning.
- Leaking or bulging cans should be discarded.

### The following foods need to be discarded if they have had any contact with flood water:

- Open containers and packages of food
- Unopened jars with paper seals under the lid (mayonnaise, salad dressing)
- All containers with screw-caps, snap lids, twist caps, flip-top lids and similar type closures that have been submerged in flood waters
- Spices, seasonings, flavorings, and extracts
- Food in canisters (flour, salt, sugar)
- Sealed glass containers and preserves sealed with paraffin (jam, jelly)
- Fresh meat, fish and poultry
- Fresh fruits and vegetables
- Containers with non-sealed fitted lids (cocoa, baking powder)
- Food in paper, foil, cellophane, or cardboard containers (cereal, pasta, rice, cookies)

- Bottled carbonated beverages with encrusted silt in the lid
- Containers with cork or cork-lined lids or caps

### **Sanitizing Cooking and Food Service Areas**

All sinks, counters, tabletops, food preparation equipment, cooking utensils, dishes, cups and flatware should be thoroughly washed and sanitized before use.

### **Commercial Food Safety**

Commercial, public-licensed food service facilities should also refer to the Licensed Facilities Emergency Response Fact Sheet of the OHA Foodborne Illness Prevention Program at:

<http://public.health.oregon.gov/HealthyEnvironments/FoodSafety/Documents/FloodingRev.pdf>

### **External Partner Resources**

CDC: Food, water, sanitation, and hygiene information for use before and after a disaster or emergency:

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/foodwater/>

U.S. Department of Agriculture - Food Safety:

[http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact\\_Sheets/Emergency\\_Preparedness\\_Fact\\_Sheets/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Emergency_Preparedness_Fact_Sheets/index.asp)

Oregon Department of Environmental Quality - Disaster Cleanup:

<http://www.oregon.gov/DEQ/stormdebrismgt.shtml>

Oregon Department of Agriculture -

<http://www.oregon.gov/ODA/news/100428local.shtml>

U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention - Floods:

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/floods/>

U.S. Department of Agriculture - Food Safety:

[www.fsis.usda.gov/](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/)