



FOOD SAFETY FOR OPERATORS DURING A POWER OUTAGE

A power outage can make food unsafe to eat due to lack of refrigeration. Power outages may be short-term (e.g., rotating blackouts) or long-term (e.g., emergency, extreme weather, planned interruption, equipment failure).

As owner/operators of food premises, it is your responsibility to maintain compliance with Food Premises Regulation 493, ensuring that the food you serve is safe. Food preparation is not recommended during a power outage.

A long-term power outage may result in the closure of your food premises by a Public Health Inspector. A lack of electricity in a food premises could result in a possible health hazard. Contact York Region Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653 if you experience a long-term power outage.

The following tips will help reduce food spoilage and prevent potential food-borne illness during an outage:

FREEZER

- Without electrical power, a full freezer will keep food frozen for approximately two days. A half-full freezer will keep food frozen for one day
- Throw out any hazardous foods such as meat, fish, poultry, eggs and leftovers that have been at temperatures above 4°C (40°F) for more than two hours
- Keep the freezer door closed as much as possible to help frozen food last longer. Ice will also help the food stay frozen
- Foods that have thawed in the freezer may be re-frozen if they still have ice crystals
- Ensure there are accurate thermometers in each freezer. Use a probe thermometer to check internal food temperatures
- Throw out food items in the freezer that have come into contact with raw meat juices

PUBLIC HEALTH

1-800-361-5653

TTY 1-866-252-9933

york.ca/FoodSafety

24-PH4-186

The logo for York Region, featuring a stylized white star or spark icon above the text "York Region" in a white, sans-serif font. The logo is set against a green background with a white outline.

REFRIGERATOR

- Without electrical power, food will be kept cool for four to six hours. Ice can also help keep the fridge's contents cold
- Throw out meat, fish, poultry, eggs and any leftovers that have been out for more than two hours at temperatures above 4°C (40°F)
- Keep the fridge door closed as much as possible to help cold food last longer
- Ensure there are accurate thermometers in each refrigerator. This will help ensure that the refrigerator temperature is 4°C (40°F) or lower. Use a probe thermometer to check internal food temperatures
- Discard food items in the refrigerator that have come into contact with raw meat juices
- Consider using coolers or ice chests with a supply of ice for food storage
- If in doubt, throw it out

HOT HOLDING

- Items that are hot-held should be discarded if the temperature is below 60°C (140°F) for more than two hours. Use a probe thermometer to check internal food temperatures

SAFE WATER

- Every food premises must be supplied by hot and cold potable water under pressure
 - If your food premises is supplied from municipal water, there should be no concern if water pressure was maintained in the drinking water system
 - If your food premises is supplied from a private well, a power outage will normally cause the water pump and treatment system to stop working
 - Immediately call York Region Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653, during regular business hours or 1-888-335-0111 after regular business hours to report the adverse water quality incident (AWQI)
 - If your water supply is treated by an Ultraviolet system (UV), ensure it is functioning according to manufacturer's guidelines and flush the drinking water system at the furthest tap before using the water
 - If your water is disinfected by chlorination, flush the lines and ensure that the free available chlorine is at a minimum 0.05 mg/L before using water
 - All water using devices (e.g., ice machines, coffee machines directly connected to the plumbing, dishwashers, etc.) should be drained, flushed and sanitized in accordance with manufacturer's guidelines prior to reuse.
- If your premise is closed during a long-term power outage, ensure the following items are completed prior to re-opening:**
- All refrigeration units are operating at 4°C (40°F) or lower
 - Hot holding units can maintain foods at 60°C (140°F) or higher
 - Hot and cold potable water under pressure is available
 - Ensure drinking water treatment devices are working as per manufacturer's instructions (where applicable)
 - Lighting and ventilation are operable