

POWER OUTAGES & FOOD SAFETY

What should I do about the food in my fridge and freezer during a power outage?

- Don't open the refrigerator or freezer door unless you must. This will help keep the food cold longer.
- Perishable foods are foods that will spoil quickly. Examples include vegetables, milk and milk products, fresh meat, poultry, seafood and ready to eat products like polony.

How long will food kept in the fridge or freezer be safe?

- **If the freezer is full:** food will stay frozen for about 48 hours.
- **If the freezer is half full:** food will stay frozen for about 24 hours.
- **If the door of the fridge is not opened:** food will stay cold in it for about four hours.



Can I refreeze foods thawed during a power outage?

If the food is only partially thawed or not above 7°C, it can be refrozen. If the juices have leaked from packages of raw meat, make sure to clean and sanitize the area.

If frozen food is thawed or refrigerated food isn't cold anymore, but looks and smells ok, is it safe?

Perishable foods that have been at room temperature for two - four hours or more may not be safe and need to be thrown out. Food contaminated with bacteria may not give off an odor or look unsafe to eat. Remember...When in doubt, throw it out.

Disposal of food

When you dispose of food, make sure to always wrap it in a newspaper before placing it in the rubbish bin. Without correct disposal, fly breeding may result and increase the risk of the spread of infectious diseases.

What can I do to plan ahead?

- Make sure fridge and freezer temperatures are cold enough (check by using fridge and freezer thermometers).
 - Refrigerator temperature should be at 4°C or lower.
 - Freezer temperature should be at -6°C or lower.
- Put block ice in the fridge if you know that the power will be out for more than four hours. You can also fill clean plastic bottles with water and freeze them ahead of time to use as ice blocks.
- Keep frozen foods close together. This will help keep them colder longer.
- If you know the power will be out for a long time, make arrangements to keep your perishable foods at a friend or family's fridge and freezer where there is power.

*A message by the Section Municipal Health Services
of the Central Karoo District Municipality (gvz)*

