

# Be Prepared In An Emergency

## Food Safety

### Renfrew County and District Health Unit

#### Safe Food During

#### Unusual Circumstances

Severe weather conditions can often result in power failures that may affect the safety of your food.

Without power, a full upright or chest freezer will normally maintain their contents in a frozen state for at least 48 hours if the freezer is left unopened and covered with heavy blankets for additional insulation. If you are anticipating power being off longer than 48 hours and large quantities of frozen foods are involved, it is recommended that alternative storage be arranged at locker plants or in the freezer of friends whose hydro has not been affected.

In the winter, hazardous foods could be stored in snow banks if well-sealed containers are used. Be careful to protect food against moisture or the container being dug out by dogs or wild animals.

Without power, the refrigerator section will keep food cool for 4 – 6 hours, depending on the temperature of the kitchen. Ice placed in the fridge can increase the cooling time.

Avoid the temptation to open the refrigerator and freezer doors to “see how things are doing”. This unnecessarily lets cold air escape.

If perishable food thaws in the freezer, it can be used safely as long as it is kept cold at 40°F (4°C) or lower.

Any hazardous food which has not been maintained cold, must not be consumed as there could be either spoilage or Dangerous changes in the food.

Follow the charts to know when to save and when to throw out, but when in doubt, throw the food out.

FROZEN FOODS			
FOOD	ICE CRYSTALS STILL INTACT OR THAWED, BUT STILL COLD	THAWED – HELD UNDER 40°F (4°C) FOR 2 HOURS OR LESS	THAWED – HELD ABOVE 40°F (4°C) FOR OVER 2 HOURS
Beef, Veal, Lamb, Pork, Poultry	Refreeze	Cook and serve or cook and refreeze.	Discard
Casseroles, stews, pies, combination dishes	Cook and serve immediately or cook and refreeze. Do not refreeze previously cooked dishes.	Cook (or reheat thoroughly) and serve immediately	Discard
Dishes containing milk, cream, soft cheeses, eggs	Cook and serve immediately.	Discard	Discard
Hard cheese, butter and margarine	Refreeze	Refreeze or refrigerate	Refreeze or refrigerate
REFRIGERATED FOODS			
Milk, Cream, Soft Cheeses	Discard 8 hours after power loss.		
Fruit Juices, opened	Safe, unrefrigerated 1 day. Discard if cloudy, bubbling, fermented, yeasty or moldy.		
Eggs (fresh)	Safe, unrefrigerated 5 – 7 days. Discard if shells are cracked. Cook thoroughly when used.		
Eggs (hard boiled in shell)	Discard if held above refrigerator temperature 40°F (4°C) over 2 hours.		
Hard Cheese, Butter and Margarine	Safe unrefrigerated if well wrapped. Discard if mold or rancid odours develop.		
Fresh Fruits and Vegetables	Normally safe as long as they look acceptable. Discard if moldy, yeasty smell, or sliminess develops.		
Fresh Meats and Poultry	Discard if held above refrigerator temperature 40°F (4°C) 2 hours or more. Discard any items contaminated by poultry or meat juices.		
Lunch Meats/Hotdogs	Discard if held above refrigerator temperature 40°F (4°C) 2 hours or more.		
Mayonnaise, opened	Discard 8 hours after power loss. ( Does not include Miracle Whip)		
Commercial Salad Dressings, Jams and Condiments	May be kept safely unrefrigerated until power returns. Discard if moldy.		



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\*Optimal Health for All in Renfrew County and District\*

**For more information call:  
613-735-8654 or 1-800-267-1097**