



STATE OF OHIO

Emergency Operations Center

NEWS RELEASE

www.ema.ohio.gov

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Special Bulletin

Food Safety Precautions and Food Related Issues

How to properly handle or dispose of perishable foods

“When in doubt, throw it out.”

The Ohio Department of Health urges residents to protect themselves from foodborne illnesses:

- use a food thermometer to check the temperature of perishable food before cooking or eating it
- throw away perishable food that is above 40 degrees Fahrenheit
- dispose of perishable food in well-contained residential trash cans/dumpsters to discourage rodents (spoiled food from schools, grocery stores, restaurants, etc. must be properly landfilled)
- keep refrigerator/freezer doors closed to keep food cold for longer (a full freezer holds food safely for 48 hours; a half-full freezer holds food safely for 24 hours)
- pack milk, meat, eggs, freezer items, etc. in ice in a cooler (Styrofoam is fine); replenish ice
- get food safety/disposal tips at www.odh.ohio.gov (see “Food Safety During Power Outages”)

The Ohio Department of Agriculture reminds residents:

- meat can be safely refrozen if it still contains ice crystals or if it is 40 degrees Fahrenheit or below
- vegetables and frozen dinners may not be refrozen if thawed; fruit may be refrozen
- restaurants/food service facilities without power should stop serving food and keep food storage equipment closed; grocery stores must stop selling perishable foods; once power is restored, food temperatures should be checked; food above 40 degrees Fahrenheit should be properly discarded

The Ohio Department of Education assures food safety in schools that have been without power:

- parents, students and staff should know food has been safely transferred to operational buildings
- some lunch items, including milk, may not be available for several days

The Ohio Department of Insurance advises residents interested in reimbursement for food costs:

- call your insurance company and be sure your agent knows how to contact you
- consult your residential, school or commercial policies for “Refrigerated Property Coverage”
- if applicable, include food loss as part of your insurance claim; provide receipts for spoiled food; compile a detailed inventory and take pictures/vidiotape of spoiled food

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services advises food stamp recipients to:

- go to your local Job and Family Services office to receive account credit for food purchased with the Ohio Direction Card (if food spoiled due to a power outage lasting longer than four hours)
- submit paperwork within 10 days of the event or discovery of the spoiled food
- request only an amount equal to the amount of food lost (the amount cannot exceed the month’s food stamp allotment); details at: <http://jfs.ohio.gov/RELEASES/FoodStamps091608.pdf>
- to see if you’re eligible for additional disaster assistance, contact your local Job and Family Services office

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