



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**Woodford County
Health Department**

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POWER OUTAGE INFORMATION

The guidelines below will help residents and licensed food establishments during a power outage or temporary interruption of electricity. Power outages occur due to weather conditions, loss of power flow through the power grid of transmission lines (brown-outs), or accidents.

For licensed food establishments, it is your responsibility to follow the guidelines listed below for providing safe food products to the public. Licensed food service establishments may have to stop operations temporarily or permanently until the electric service is restored.

Here are some guidelines on what to do if the power goes out in your foodservice facility or retail food store. Keep this handout for future reference.

- 1) Report the outage to your utility company **IMMEDIATELY** and stay in contact with the utility company to determine the estimated duration of the power outage.
- 2) Notify the Woodford County Health Department if the power is out for more than **four (4) hours**. This is your responsibility and it is a requirement to have a foodservice license. We can provide guidance. Remember, the public counts on you to deliver safe food.
- 3) If the facility is open, close it to put all manpower efforts into monitoring the safety of the food. If the facility is closed, a certified food manager should be at the facility if there is an outage more than four hours in length. Be sure employees are trained to know what to do.
- 4) Hot held potentially hazardous foods should be placed in the walk-in cooler or freezer immediately. If you only have smaller coolers, use an ice bath to quickly cool the hot foods first so the ambient air temperature of the small cooler doesn't allow for food spoilage. Once the hot food is cooled, place it in the cooler as soon as possible.
- 5) Once the food is put away, keep cooler and freezer doors closed.
- 6) Remember that potentially hazardous food can only be between 41° F and 135° F for 4 hours (maximum time) and frozen foods should remain frozen. Monitor and document internal food temperatures.
- 7) Monitor and document cooler temperatures and times and place food from the cooler into the freezer if needed.
- 8) If food volumes are large, be prepared to secure refrigerated or frozen truck trailers.
- 9) If your facility has a back-up generator, have it inspected frequently to insure that it is operational. Be sure it is hooked up to coolers and freezers. Train employees to operate it.

If you have any questions, please contact the Woodford County Health Department at 309-467-3064. If you have a public health emergency, please call 9-1-1. After normal business hours, if you have a public health non-emergency or immediate issue/concern, please call 309-467-2375 and ask for the public health administrator on call.