FREE PRINTABLE · FOOD SAFETY

Fridge & Freezer Outage Food-Safety Chart

A one-page reference to tape inside a cabinet door. Times and keep-or-discard guidance below are from FoodSafety.gov, the FDA, and the CDC. They are not a substitute for your own thermometer readings or local official advice.

KEEP THE DOORS CLOSED

Your refrigerator will keep food safe for up to 4 hours during a power outage if you keep the door closed. A full freezer holds a safe temperature for about 48 hours (about 24 hours if it is half full) if the door stays closed. (FoodSafety.gov / USDA)

Up to 4 hours	About 48 hours	About 24 hours
Closed refrigerator	Full freezer, door closed	Half-full freezer, door closed

THE 40°F SAFETY LINE

40°F (4°C) or below is the safe temperature for perishable food. Perishable food — meat, poultry, fish, eggs, cut produce, leftovers, soft cheeses, and dairy — held above 40°F for 2 hours or more (or 1 hour if the room is above 90°F) should be discarded. After 4 hours without power, FoodSafety.gov also says to discard refrigerated perishable food such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and leftovers. Use an appliance thermometer in the fridge and the freezer when you can.

Never taste food to test its safety — when in doubt, throw it out.

REFRIGERATED FOOD AFTER A POWER OUTAGE · FOODSAFETY.GOV CHART

Use this as a quick guide when food has been above 40°F (4°C) for more than 2 hours. Evaluate each item separately. The full official chart is on FoodSafety.gov (Food Safety During a Power Outage).

USUALLY STILL SAFE TO KEEP

- Hard cheeses (Cheddar, Swiss, Parmesan, provolone, and similar) and processed cheeses
- Butter and margarine
- Fresh fruits and vegetables that are still uncut
- Breads, rolls, muffins, and tortillas; breakfast foods such as bagels or pancakes
- Peanut butter; jelly, relish, mustard, ketchup, olives, pickles
- Opened vinegar-based dressings; Worcestershire, soy, and barbecue sauces

DISCARD IF ABOVE 40°F FOR MORE THAN 2 HOURS

- Raw or leftover cooked meat, poultry, fish, or seafood; lunch meats, gravy, and leftovers
- Milk, cream, yogurt, sour cream, and opened baby formula
- Soft cheeses (Brie, cottage, cream, mozzarella, ricotta, and similar) and shredded cheeses
- Eggs, egg dishes, custards, and puddings
- Cut melon, cut tomatoes, cut leafy greens, and other cut produce; cooked vegetables
- Opened creamy dressings; cream-filled pastries and custard or cream pies

Opened mayonnaise, tartar sauce, and horseradish are a special case on the official chart: discard if they have been above 50°F (10°C) for more than 8 hours.

FROZEN FOOD · WHEN YOU CAN REFREEZE

A full freezer holds a safe temperature for about 48 hours (about 24 hours if half full) if the door stays closed. Food may be safely refrozen or cooked if it still contains ice crystals or is at 40°F (4°C) or below. Quality may suffer, but it is still safe. Never taste food to decide. (FoodSafety.gov)

OUTAGE TIME LOG · FILL IN OR TYPE

Write the times and thermometer readings here so you can use the rules above with real numbers, not a guess.

Power went out (date and time)

Power came back on (date and time)

Fridge thermometer reading

Freezer thermometer reading

Sources: FoodSafety.gov, FDA, CDC · ReadyGearHub.com