

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Patty Mains

Chester County EOC

610-344-4779

[Eoc-pio@chesco.org](mailto:Eoc-pio@chesco.org)

### Food Safety with Power Outages; During and After

West Chester, PA: The Chester County Health Department has provided safety tips for food safety for when the power has been restored to residents in Chester County.

When power is restored you will need to determine the safety of your food. Here's how:

-If an appliance thermometer was kept in the freezer, check the temperature when the power comes back on. If the freezer thermometer reads 40° F or below, the food is safe and may be refrozen.

-If a thermometer has not been kept in the freezer, check each package of food to determine its safety. You can't rely on appearance or odor. If the food still contains ice crystals or is 40° F or below, it is safe to refreeze or cook. Throw away any food that has a temperature of more than 40° F.

-Refrigerated food should be safe as long as the power was out for no more than 4 hours and the refrigerator door was kept shut. Discard any perishable food (such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs or leftovers) that has been above 40° F for two hours or more.

Keep in mind that perishable food such as meat, poultry, seafood, milk, and eggs that are not kept adequately refrigerated or frozen may cause illness if consumed, even when they are thoroughly cooked.

Treat thawed foods as follows:

-Do not refreeze frozen dinners that have thawed

-Do not refreeze thawed vegetables. Spoilage may begin before bad odors develop. You can refreeze vegetables only if there are ice crystals remain throughout the package. Any question on the condition of any vegetable, discard them.

-Any meat or poultry that has an offensive odor or has been in the freezer with a temperature of 40°F or higher for 2 or more hours should be thrown away. Discard all stuffed poultry. Cooked meat can be refrozen. Do not trust your sense of smell.

-Fish and Shellfish are extremely perishable. Do not refreeze unless there are ice crystals remain throughout the package.

-Ice cream, do not refreeze melted ice cream. Throw it out.

#### Drinking Water:

When power goes out, water purification systems may not be functioning fully. Safe water for drinking, cooking, and personal hygiene includes bottled, boiled, or treated water. Here are some general rules concerning safe water:

-Do not use contaminated water to wash dishes, brush teeth, wash and prepare food, wash hands, make ice or make baby formula. Use baby formula that does not need to have water added.

-If you used bottled water, be sure it came from a safe source. Use only bottled water, boiled or treated water until your supply has been tested and found safe.

-Boiling water, bring to a rolling boil for 1 minute will kill most organisms.

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