

Guidelines for Food Safety During Temporary Power Outages

This Food Safety Notice is being issued by the Tulsa City-County Health Department. It was adapted from a document developed by the Department of Health Services' Food and Drug Branch in the State of California to provide guidance to the retail food industry.

The food items of concern are those that are time/temperature control for safety (TCS) foods. Generally, TCS foods are moist, perishable foods in and on which bacteria can grow most easily during the time when the food is held in the temperature danger zone (41°F to 135°F).

WHEN THE POWER IS RESTORED

- ❑ Identify TCS foods that may have been in the temperature danger zone.
- ❑ Check the internal food temperature.
- ❑ Separate packages of food in refrigeration units and freezers to allow for faster cooling.

Use the following to determine the disposition of TCS foods:

REFRIGERATED TCS FOODS

If food cannot be rapidly cooled as specified in the table below, it cannot be sold. Use the table below for handling TCS foods stored in refrigeration units during power outages:

Duration of Power Outage (hours)	Food Above 41° in Cold Holding Units When Power is Restored
2 hours or less	May be sold if immediately cooled to and maintained at 41°F or below with 2 hours of power outage
More than 2 hours	Cannot be sold. Must be discarded

REOPENING

If you have voluntarily closed your facility, the following conditions should be verified prior to resuming food preparation and/or the sale of time/temperature control for safety foods:

1. All unsafe TCS food has been discarded
 - ❑ If there are any questions regarding the safety of specific foods, contact the Tulsa Health Department.
2. Electricity and gas services have been restored.
3. All circuit breakers have been properly reset as needed.
4. All equipment and facilities are operating properly, including:
 - ❑ Lighting
 - ❑ Refrigeration
 - ❑ Hot holding
 - ❑ Ventilation
 - ❑ Toilet facilities
5. Hot (minimum 135° F) and cold potable water is available, under pressure for:
 - ❑ Hand washing
 - ❑ Proper dishwashing

If your facility was closed by the Tulsa Health Department, it must remain closed until you obtain official approval to reopen.

DISPOSAL OF FOOD

- ❑ **TCS Foods that have been subjected to unsafe temperatures prior to the power outage might not be safe to eat even if the procedures in the table on the previous page are followed.**

WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!

- ❑ If it is determined that the food must be discarded, document the type and amount of food and the reason for disposal for insurance and regulatory purposes.
- ❑ Small volumes of food to be discarded can be denatured with a cleaning product (such as bleach) and placed in the outside refuse bin.
- ❑ To discard large volumes of food, contact your refuse disposal company or your local landfill operator for disposal instructions.
- ❑ If there are any questions regarding the safety of specific foods, contact the Tulsa Health Department.

This document may serve as a guideline for situations encountered during power outages. The Tulsa Health Department is responsible for enforcing the local Food Codes and the State of Oklahoma Food Code, and shall determine appropriate actions to be taken based on local conditions. If you have any questions, please call Food Protection Services at (918) 595-4300.