

STATE OF COLORADO

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Dedicated to protecting and improving the health and environment of the people of Colorado

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Colorado Department
of Public Health
and Environment

Wildfire Recovery Guidance for Food Safety **Food safety tips to follow if the power goes out**

- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to maintain a cold temperature. The refrigerator will keep food cold for about four hours if unopened. A full freezer will hold the temperature for approximately 48 hours (24 hours if it is half full) if the door remains closed.
- If the food stored in the refrigerator has been held above 41 F for more than four hours, throw it away.
- If food stored in the freezer has thawed but is still below 41 F, it can be refrozen. Although the quality of the food may be compromised, it still should be safe to eat.
- Always keep a thermometer in the upper one-third of a refrigerator or freezer to help monitor the air temperature and to aid in the determination of whether the unit may have held the food at unsafe temperatures for more than four hours. If there isn't a thermometer in the unit, each package of food should be checked with a probe thermometer to determine its safety.
- Perishable foods such as meat, poultry, seafood, milk and eggs should be held below 41 F at all times to avoid illness when consumed.

If a refrigerator or freezer has been cleared of all spoiled and questionable foods but a spoiled food odor persists:

- Clean the shelves and interior with hot soapy water; then rinse with clean water.
- Sanitize surfaces with a bleach solution of one tablespoon of bleach per gallon of water. If odors still are present after cleaning, try placing a container of baking soda, activated charcoal or dry coffee grounds inside the unit. Close the door and wait 24 hours or until the odor is no longer present.

Once power is restored, all unsafe or questionable perishable food should be discarded. When in doubt, throw it out!

If you need additional information, please contact the Division of Environment Health and Sustainability at 303-692-3645.