

AFTER THE STORM...

Salvaging Stored Foods



Do not eat any food that may have come in contact with flood waters.

- Discard food not in a waterproof container if you suspect it may have come in contact with flood waters (including containers with screw-caps, snap lids, pull tops and crimped caps.)
- Home canned foods, boxes and bags of food and cardboard boxes containing juice, milk and baby formula should also be discarded if they come in contact with flood waters.
- Discard commercially canned food in metal cans if damaged. Examine the can for evidence of swelling, leakage, extensive rusting or severe dents. If these conditions are present, discard the product.
- Remove labels from undamaged cans, and wash the cans well with soap and hot water. Rinse with water safe for drinking. Place cans for 15 minutes in a mixture of 1 tablespoon chlorine bleach per gallon of water suitable for drinking. Allow cans to air-dry at least 1 hour before using or storing.

AFTER THE STORM...

Safety of Drinking Water



- When the safety of drinking water supplies are in question, use bottled water that has not been exposed to flood waters.
- If bottled water is not available, treat water to destroy disease-causing organisms that could be present.
- Filter cloudy water through clean cloth. Boil the water for one minute. After cooling for at least one minute, store the water in clean containers with lids.
- If boiling is not an option, disinfect the water using unscented chlorine bleach. Add 1/8 teaspoon (8 drops) for each gallon of water and let stand for 30 minutes. Some disease-causing organisms are resistant to chlorine, but chlorine treatment alone will certainly reduce risk in an emergency situation.

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College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences
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Be Prepared, Georgia! Food and Water Safety in Severe Storms and Hurricanes



Severe storms and hurricanes can lead to power outages and flooding. This can lead to unsafe food and drinking water. Prior planning can help you weather the storm with safe food and water. For more information, contact your local Cooperative Extension office by calling 1-800-ASK-UGA1.

Material in this document excerpted from: USDA-FSIS. A Consumer's Guide to Food Safety—Severe Storms and Hurricanes. www.fsis.usda.gov/pdf/severe_storms_and_hurricanes_guide.pdf

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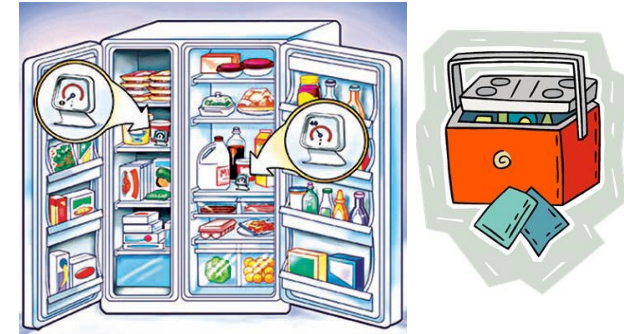
GEORGIA!

BEFORE THE STORM...

- Place a refrigerator/freezer thermometer in your refrigerator and freezer before losing power.
- Make sure the temperature of your refrigerator is at 40 degrees F or colder and your freezer is at 0 degrees F or colder.
- Freeze containers of water for ice to help keep food cold in the refrigerator, freezer or coolers once the power goes out.
- Purchasing blocks of ice may be an option. Look for sources of block ice in the telephone directory.
- Dry ice (which is a solid form of carbon dioxide) can also be used. Look for sources of dry ice in the telephone directory.
- Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible when the power is off. This will help them stay cold inside.

BEFORE THE STORM...

- A refrigerator will keep food safely cold for about 4 hours if the door remains closed.
- Have coolers available to keep refrigerated foods cold if power is out for more than 4 hours.
- Freeze refrigerated foods like leftovers, milk and fresh meat that you may not need immediately.
- Group foods together in the freezer to help them stay cold longer.
- A full freezer will hold the temperature for about 48 hours, while a freezer that is half full will only maintain its temperature for about 24 hours if the door stays closed.
- Store boxed and canned foods and bottled water on high shelves to keep them away from contaminated water in case of flooding.
- Have a supply of plain, unscented chlorine bleach on hand that can be used for cleaning, sanitizing and treating drinking water.



AFTER THE STORM...

- Discard perishable refrigerated foods like meats, poultry, fish, soft cheeses, milk, eggs, leftovers and deli items if the power stays off for more than 4 hours and the temperature of the food is not kept at 40 degrees F or colder.
- If power has been out several days, check the thermometer in the freezer. If the temperature is 40 degrees F or colder or if the food still contains ice crystals, then it can be safely used. How long can you keep the food at 40 and still use it? Think about how long you would have been able to keep it in your refrigerator.
- When in doubt, throw it out!