

For Immediate Release

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Power Outage – Food Safety Tips

Wichita Falls, Texas – The Wichita Falls-Wichita County Public Health District is aware of some of the extended power outages in Wichita County due to last night’s storm. The Health District would like to remind everyone to take steps to ensure they keep their families safe from foodborne illnesses.

If your home experiences a temporary power outage, here are some key reminders to keep your food out of the Danger Zone:

Monitor Temperatures: Keep an appliance thermometer in both the refrigerator and freezer. Make sure the refrigerator temperature is at 41 F or below and the freezer is at 0 F or below.

4-Hour Window: Your refrigerator will keep food safe for up to 4 hours during a power outage. After 4 hours without power, discard refrigerated perishable food. Meat, poultry, fish, eggs and leftovers must be thrown out.

When in Doubt, Throw it Out: Never taste or smell food to determine its safety. Foodborne pathogens can grow to dangerous levels in food without changing the appearance, smell, and/or texture of food.

Food Keeps Longer in a Freezer: If the doors stay closed, food will stay safe for up to 48 hours in a full freezer and 24 hours in a half-full freezer.

Use a Cooler: Transfer food to a cooler and fill with ice or frozen gel packs. Make sure there is enough ice to keep food in the cooler at 41 F or below. Add more ice to the cooler as it begins to melt.

When Able, Plan Ahead: Obtain dry ice or block ice if your power is going to be out for a prolonged period. Fifty pounds of dry ice should hold an 18-cubic-foot freezer for 2 days. (Caution: Do not touch dry ice with bare hands or place it in direct contact with food.)

Cook Before Re-freezing: Thawed foods that have remained at or below 41 F should be used as soon as possible. Do not refreeze thawed foods. Cook foods to proper temperatures to ensure food safety.

Food Minimum Internal Cooking Temperatures: Ground Meats 155 F for 15 seconds, Pork 145 F for 15 seconds, Poultry and stuffed meats 165 F for 15 seconds, Eggs 145 F for 15 seconds

Permitted food facilities with questions regarding food safety should contact the Health District.

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