

## **FEATURE – USDA FOOD SAFETY ADVICE AFTER POWER LOSS**

INTRO: When natural disasters strike your home, will the food in your kitchen be safe? US Dept of Agriculture experts have the answers. USDA's Pat O'Leary explains. (1:25)

EXPERTS WITH THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE SAY IF YOU'VE LOST POWER FOR DAYS, THE FOOD IN YOUR REFRIGERATOR IS PROBABLY NOT SAFE AND SHOULD BE THROWN AWAY. FOR SHORTER OUTAGES FOLLOW THIS ADVICE.

Kathy Bernard, USDA FSIS: The most important thing to remember when the power goes out you can do is to keep your refrigerator and freezer doors closed. You want to keep the cold air in there as long as possible. The refrigerator will probably stay safe for only about four hours after the power goes out if you keep the door closed. A fully stocked freezer should stay safe for about two days. If it's half full then it should stay safe for about a day. If it looks like the power is going to be out for an extended period of time, hopefully you can buy some blocks of ice and put them in the refrigerator or some dry ice in the freezer. You can also take the items and put them into a cooler with ice or frozen gel products.

KEEP REFRIGERATED FOODS AT FORTY DEGREES FAHRENHEIT OR BELOW AND FROZEN FOODS AT ZERO DEGREES FAHRENHEIT OR BELOW. READ ABOUT EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS ON USDA'S WEB SITE. THE EXPERTS SAY THESE PRECAUTIONS CAN HELP PREVENT FOODBORNE ILLNESS CAUSED BY BACTERIA - BUT:

Bernard: If you're not sure if a food is safe, don't take a chance. When in doubt, just throw it out.

LEARN MORE ON THE WEB AT [FSIS.USDA.GOV](http://FSIS.USDA.GOV) OR [ASKKAREN.GOV](http://ASKKAREN.GOV). OR CALL THE USDA'S MEAT & POULTRY HOTLINE AT 1-888-MPHOTLINE. FOR THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, I'M PAT O'LEARY.