FOOD SAFETY INFO:  
When Electricity Fails in Food Facilities

A power outage could happen at any time... and could last from several minutes to several days. Food facility operators MUST be prepared to safeguard foods when outages occur. Additionally, when hot water or adequate refrigeration cannot be provided, the law REQUIRES that food facilities be closed. Precautions MUST be taken whether you remain open for business, or temporarily close your doors to the public....

Always remember the importance of proper temperature control . . .

✓ Cold foods should be at 41° F or below
✓ Hot foods should be at 135° F or above

Serve prepared ready-to-eat perishable foods first.
Perishable foods such as milk, meats, and other foods normally stored under refrigeration will spoil rapidly without it. These foods, if still cold, should be used as quickly as possible.
Pack perishable foods in ice — from your own ice machine or purchased at another facility where electrical service has not been disrupted.
Foods in the freezer can last several days without power if the door is NOT opened frequently. If possible, quickly consolidate frozen foods into one freezer. Foods that thaw and stay below 41° F may be used, but should not be refrozen.
Prepared and other perishable foods should be discarded when safe hot and cold holding temperatures cannot be maintained.
A power outage of 2 hours or less is not considered hazardous to food that was held under safe conditions when the outage began.

If you use back-up generators as an emergency power source, run them outdoors.
Battery operated emergency lights may be useful during emergencies.
Without electricity, many pieces of essential equipment will not function, including refrigeration units, food warming and holding units, and cash registers.
Without electricity, lights will not function, and many indoor areas may be too dark for employees to safely work in.
Call PG&E:
1-800-743-5000 for emergency and customer service, or
1-800-743-5002 for information on power outages.
Call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline for additional information on food safety during an emergency:
1-888-674-6854 (TTY)
Call the Department of Environmental Health if you have any questions concerning the safety of your food: 408-918-3400
When power goes out . . .

☐ Note the time when the outage begins.
☐ Take steps to keep cold foods at or below 41°F:
  ✓ Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed.
  ✓ If practical, group packages of cold food together.
  ✓ Cover open refrigerated and frozen food cases.
  ✓ CAUTION: the use of dry ice in an enclosed area may result in unsafe build-up of CO₂ (carbon dioxide).
☐ Use caution with hot foods:
  ✓ Discard food that is in the process of being cooked, but has not yet reached the final temperature.
  ✓ Do not place hot foods in refrigerators or freezers.
  ✓ Use “canned heat” under foods on electric steam tables to help maintain food at or above 135°F.
  ✓ Use ice and/or ice-baths to rapidly cool small batches of hot food.

Discontinue food preparation if ANY of the following conditions exist . . .

☐ No hot water or inadequate water pressure.
☐ Inability to properly wash, rinse, and sanitize utensils.
☐ Hood ventilation and make-up air is not working AND you have equipment that uses gas or solid fuel...
  DANGER: a build-up of toxic fumes may cause injury or death.
☐ Lack of sufficient light in food prep areas, which may be dangerous to your employees.
☐ Unsafe food temperatures, including:
  ✓ Cold holding
  ✓ Hot holding
  ✓ Cooking

When power is restored . . .

☐ Check internal food temperatures to identify potentially hazardous foods that have been in the temperature danger zone, and follow guidelines listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>length of outage</th>
<th>Internal Temperature of REFRIGERATED Potentially Hazardous Foods (PHF) when power is restored</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45°F or below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-2 hours</td>
<td>PFH can be sold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3 hours</td>
<td>PHF can be sold, but must be cooled to 41°F or below within 2 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 or more hours</td>
<td>Immediately cool PHF to 41°F or below within 1 hour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If food cannot be cooled as specified above, it cannot be sold

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>length of outage</th>
<th>Potentially Hazardous Foods (PHF) in HOT HOLDING Units below 135°F when power is restored</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0-2 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Food may be sold if reheated to 165°F and then held at 135°F or above; OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Food may be sold if cooled to 41°F or below within 2 hours following restoration of power; if food cannot be cooled within 2 hours, it cannot be sold.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Before reopening your facility . . .

☐ All unsafe potentially hazardous foods MUST be discarded.
☐ Electricity and gas services MUST be restored.
☐ All equipment MUST be operating properly, including:
  ✓ Refrigeration
  ✓ Hot holding
  ✓ Lighting
  ✓ Ventilation
☐ Hot water (minimum 120°F) MUST be available for hand washing, dishwashing, and cleaning (water must be potable and under pressure).
☐ Toilet facilities must be fully operational.

Disposal of food . . .

☐ Potentially hazardous foods held at unsafe temperatures prior to the power outage MAY NOT be safe to eat... when in doubt, throw it out!
☐ If food must be discarded, document the type and amount, and the reason for disposal for insurance and regulatory records.
☐ Small quantities of food for disposal can be denatured with a cleaning product (e.g., household bleach) and placed in your normal refuse container.
☐ To discard large quantities of food, contact your refuse disposal company or the local landfill for instructions.

Adapted from California Department of Health Services Food Safety Notice FSN-0102