

Welcome back to the Public Health Preparedness Press!



Each month, this newsletter will keep you informed about seasonal preparedness topics, public health awareness campaigns, and tools you can use both in your work and in your everyday life. Whether it's extreme weather, emergency planning, or national health observances, we're here to keep preparedness top of mind year-round.

Food Preparedness & Safety During Winter Emergencies

Winter storms and other emergencies can lead to extended power outages, making food planning and safety especially important. Residents are encouraged to prepare now by stocking foods that can be eaten safely without electricity, refrigeration, or cooking.

Build an Emergency Food Supply

Plan for at least a **several-day supply of non-perishable food** for each household member. Choose items your family will eat and remember any special dietary needs. Suggested items include:

- Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits, and vegetables (with a manual can opener)
- Protein or fruit bars
- Dry cereal or granola
- Peanut butter
- Dried fruit
- Canned juices
- Shelf-stable, non-perishable milk
- High-energy foods
- Infant food or formula
- Comfort or stress foods



Food Safety and Sanitation

Without power or proper refrigeration, food can become unsafe quickly. Bacteria grow rapidly between **40°F and 140°F**, increasing the risk of foodborne illness.

- Keep food covered and utensils clean.
- Throw away food that has come into contact with flood water.
- Discard any food left at room temperature for **two hours or more**.
- Do not eat food with an unusual smell, color, or texture.
- When in doubt, **throw it out**.

Managing Food During Power Outages

- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible.
- An unopened refrigerator will keep food cold for about **four hours**.



- Refrigerated or frozen foods should be kept at **40°F or below**.
- Discard perishable foods that have been above 40°F for two hours or more.
- If available, dry ice can help keep frozen foods cold when handled properly and safely.

Safe Cooking Options

If cooking is necessary, use approved alternative sources such as candle warmers, chafing dishes, fondue pots, or fireplaces. **Outdoor-only equipment**, such as charcoal grills and camp stoves, should never be used indoors due to carbon monoxide risk. Commercially canned foods may be eaten directly from the can if needed.

Preparing food supplies and knowing how to handle food safely during a power outage can help keep households healthy and reduce stress during winter emergencies.

What's Next?

In future issues of the Public Health Preparedness Press, we'll continue exploring topics that matter to our work and our community, like emergency communication, public health response roles, and seasonal hazards.

If you have ideas, questions, or want to highlight team efforts in preparedness, reach out! Let's make this a helpful, interactive resource for everyone.

Thanks for reading! 😊