



Safe Food after a Tornado

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Every county in Michigan has experienced at least one tornado in the past 55 years. The Michigan State Police Emergency Management Division gives tornadoes a high human health risk rating. Because of the risk for unprotected individuals in a storm path and the lack of warning time. (MSP-EMD Michigan Hazard Analysis, December 2001).



- Check foods and discard any containing particles of glass or slivers of other debris.
- Discard canned foods with broken seams.
- Purchase bottled water until you are certain your water supply is safe.
- Water from undamaged hot water tanks and water pipes is generally safe to drink.
- Bottled juices and the liquid from canned fruits and vegetables are a source of water.

Be prepared

Planning ahead for seasonal storms can help families prepare for the worst. Keep your freezer as full as possible by freezing water in plastic containers and using them to fill any empty spaces not occupied by frozen foods. Keep a clean cooler on hand. Buy freezer-pack inserts and keep them frozen for use in the cooler. Keep an appliance thermometer in the refrigerator and freezer at all times to see if food is being stored at safe temperatures (34 to 40 degrees F for the refrigerator; 0 degrees F for the freezer).

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Food and water in a tornado

In an area that has sustained tornado damage, the water supply may be disrupted or contaminated. You can drink water from the community water system unless told or have reason to suspect it has become contaminated. Also, food in damaged buildings and homes may be hazardous.

- Drink only approved or chlorinated water.
- Consider all water from wells, cisterns and other delivery systems in the disaster area unsafe until tested.

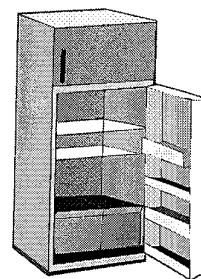
Power out chart

Keep an appliance thermometer in both the refrigerator and freezer at all times — refrigerator at 40 degrees F and freezer at 0 degrees F.

You cannot rely on appearance or odor. Never taste food to determine its safety.

Some foods may look and smell fine, but, if they have been warm too long, they may contain food poisoning bacteria in quantities that could make you sick.

Foods labeled “refrigerate after opening” are perishable and should be discarded if they have been without refrigeration for more than 2 hours. Those that do not require refrigeration either before or after opening may be refrigerated again.



Discard: The following should be discarded if kept over two hours above 40 degrees F.

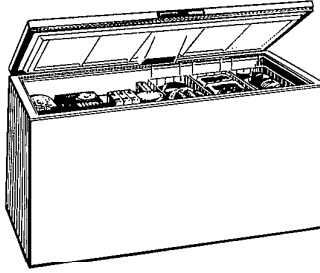
- Meat, poultry, fish, eggs and egg substitutes — raw or cooked.
- Milk, cream, yogurt and soft cheese, shredded cheese.
- Casseroles, stews or soups.
- Lunch meats and hot dogs.
- Creamy-based salad dressings.

- Custard, chiffon or cheese pies.
- Cream-filled pastries.
- Refrigerator and cookie dough.
- Discard open mayonnaise, tartar sauce and horseradish if above 50 degrees F for over eight hours.

Save: The following foods should keep at room temperature a few days. Discard anything that is moldy or has an unusual odor.

- Butter or margarine.
- Processed and hard cheese.
- Fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Dried fruits and coconut.
- Opened jars of vinegar-based salad dressings, jelly, relish, taco sauce, barbecue sauce, mustard, ketchup, olives and peanut butter.
- Fruit juices, unopened.
- Fresh herbs and spices.
- Fruit pies, bread, rolls and muffins.
- Cakes, except cream cheese frosted or cream filled.
- Flour and nuts.

Allow time for refrigerators to reach the proper temperature below 41 degrees before restocking.



From the freezer

Meats and poultry — Discard if the color or odor is questionable. Thawed meat and poultry should be thoroughly cooked before refreezing and used as soon as possible.

Fruits (including juices) — Refreeze only those that look and smell acceptable.

Vegetables — Thoroughly cook and serve thawed vegetables immediately or refreeze after cooking.

Fish and shellfish — Discard, these highly perishable foods may be spoiled even if there is no bad odor.

Ice cream — Do not use melted ice cream.

Baked goods — Breads, cakes and pastries without custard fillings may be refrozen, but use as soon as possible. Casseroles, pies, combination salads, and stews should be cooked and reheated thoroughly and served immediately.

Remember, when in doubt, throw it out!

Source: Clemson University Extension. Home & Garden Information Center.

For more information about safe food handling and preparation:

FDA's Food Information Hotline
1-888-SAFEFOOD (1-888-723-3366)

USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline
1-800-535-4555

FDA's Food Information and Seafood Hotline
1-800-332-4010

United States Food Safety Web Site
www.foodsafety.gov

The Food Domain. Michigan State University
www.fooddomain.msu.edu

Extension Disaster Education Network
www.eden.lsu.edu

Federal Emergency Management Agency
www.fema.gov



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