



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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September 16, 2008. **Day two of power outage**

The Cuyahoga County Public Health Collaborative continues to urge caution with the use of Perishable Foods, Gas generators and Electric Powered Medical Devices after Extended Power Outages

Electric utility service in many area of Cuyahoga County is being restored, but many are still without power because of downed power lines. Crews are working to restore service, however, many areas may take longer to and consumers should be aware of food safety concerns.

Please throw it out! Your health is important. If you continue to experience the loss of electricity, you are reaching a point where your foods in the refrigerator should be discarded.

If power is restored within 48 hours of an outage, there should be no significant problems with foods that were **completely frozen** prior to the outage. A freezer that is half full will hold food safely for up to 24 hours. A full freezer will hold food safely for up to 48 hours.

Dry ice: if you know that your power will be out for an extended period of time, fifty pounds of dry ice should hold an 18 foot cubic foot freezer at the proper temperature for 2 days. Contact a dry ice distributor in your area for service.

Throw away the following foods if they are kept at temperatures of more than 40 degrees for more than two hours: raw or uncooked meat, poultry, seafood, milk, cream, yogurt, soft cheeses, fresh eggs, meat topped pizza and lunch meat, casseroles, stews or soups, cream filled pastries, mayonnaise and tarter sauce. Use a food thermometer to check the temperature of your food right before you cook or eat it.

Please time your discards with your local garbage pick-up day.

Your local health departments are continuing to proactively assess the status of power in area restaurants and advising operators.

WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!

If you have any doubts about your foods throw them out. If you have any concerns about an area vendor that sells food or other concerns, please contact your local health department for more information at the Cuyahoga County Board of Health at (216) 201-2001, the Cleveland Department of Public Health at (216) 664-2300, and the Shaker Hts. Health Department at 216-491-1482.

Portable Generators

We also urge caution about the use of portable generators and other power equipment. Such equipment should only be used in well ventilated areas, ideally outdoors. The same is true for camp stoves and charcoals grills.

Combustible engines produce carbon monoxide, an odorless and colorless gas that can rapidly build up indoors before individuals are aware they are being exposed.

Electric Powered Medical Devices

Most individuals on ventilators have back up generators and batteries. If you have an electric powered medical device, please be sure to maintain a back up plan to relocate if needed. If you have a medical emergency, please call 911 for assistance.

Please check on your neighbor! You may be able to help someone with a special need.

The Cuyahoga County Division of Emergency Services and the American Red Cross are coordinating a multi agency effort with local health departments, local fire departments, the County Department of Senior and Adult Services and many others to assist in meeting the basic needs of those most impacted by this electrical power outage.