

Electric Line Newsletter

KEEP FOOD SAFE WHEN THE POWER GOES OUT

Severe winds, lightning and even squirrels can temporarily cause the power to go out. We understand power outages of any length can be frustrating, especially when your fridge is stocked with perishable foods.

Extended power outages are rare, but when they occur, it's important to understand food safety measures to take to avoid illness.

Here are a few food safety tips to keep in mind before, during and after a power outage.

Before an outage

A good rule of thumb is to keep an emergency supply kit on hand. Be sure to include nonperishable food items like bottled water, powdered milk, canned goods, cereal and protein bars in your emergency kit.

If you have advance warning that an outage is possible, fill a cooler with ice—just in case the outage spans several hours. Having a cooler ready to go can buy extra time for your refrigerated, perishable items.

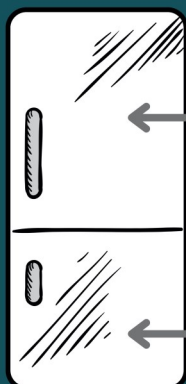
During an outage

If an outage occurs, do not open the refrigerator or freezer unless *absolutely* necessary. An unopened refrigerator will keep food cold for about four hours. A half-full freezer will keep food frozen for about 24 hours and a full freezer for about 48 hours. If it looks like the power outage will last longer than four hours, move your important perishable items to an ice-filled cooler.

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Keep Food Safe During and After a Power Outage

Refrigerated or frozen foods may not be safe to eat after a power outage. Use these tips to minimize food loss and reduce risk of illness.



Refrigerated food will last four hours. After four hours, place refrigerated foods in a cooler with ice.

Food in a **half-full** freezer will last 24 hours. Food in a **full** freezer will last 48 hours.

Food Safety Tips

1. Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible.
2. Throw out any food with an unusual odor, color or texture.
3. Throw out perishable food in your refrigerator after four hours without power or a cold source (like a cooler with ice).

When in doubt, throw it out!



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After an outage

If refrigerated foods have been exposed to temperatures higher than 40 degrees for more than two hours, the American Red Cross recommends discarding the items. If any foods have an unusual color, odor or texture, they should be thrown away.

While most perishable foods should be thrown out after an extended outage, there are a few items that are safe to consume after a two-hour exposure to 40+ degrees:

- hard cheeses that are properly wrapped
- butter or margarine that is properly wrapped
- taco, barbecue and soy sauces
- peanut butter, jelly, mustard, ketchup and relish

The best way to avoid illness from spoiled food during or after an outage is to follow the four-hour rule of thumb. After an outage, always smell and inspect foods before consuming and remember: when in doubt, throw it out.

To learn more about food safety after an emergency, visit www.ready.gov/food

SAVE A LIFE: AVOID DISTRACTIONS WHILE DRIVING

Some temptations are hard to resist. For example, it can be especially challenging to turn down that last piece of chocolate cake.

While driving, we typically hear that “ding” on our phone, alerting us to a text or call coming through, and we sometimes feel the urgent need to check it. We know we shouldn’t, but we reason that we’re going to make an exception—just this once.

So, why do we indulge in behavior we know to be wrong, dangerous and in many states, illegal? Call it hubris. According to AAA research, most people feel they are better-than-average drivers. After all, we have busy lives and are accustomed to multitasking. But mounds of research and thousands of deaths every year prove otherwise.

August is Back to School Safety Month. As a new school year begins with young drivers and school buses back on the road, now is a good time to remind folks of the dangers of distracted driving.

The reality is that using a phone while driving creates enormous potential for injuries and fatalities. Dis-

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tractions take a motorist's attention off driving, which can make a driver miss critical events, objects and cues, potentially leading to a crash.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, one of every 10 fatal crashes in the U.S. involves distracted driving, resulting in more than 3,000 deaths annually. I find this statistic heartbreaking considering so many of these accidents could easily be avoided if we'd simply put down our phones while driving.

Distracted driving is considered any activity that diverts our attention, including texting or talking on the phone, and adjusting the navigation or entertainment system. Texting is by far one of the most dangerous distractions. Sending or reading one text takes your eyes off the road for an average of five seconds. At 55 mph, that's like driving the length of an entire football field with your eyes closed.

In addition to refraining from texting while driving, we can help keep the roads safe by moving over for first responders and other emergency vehicles. Additionally, if you see utility crews conducting work near the roadside, please move over when possible and give them extra space to perform their work safely.

At Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative, safety is foremost in everything we do—for our employees and the members of the communities we serve. We routinely remind our crews of the dangers of distracted driving, and we hope you'll have similar conversations with your teens who may be new to the roadways and are especially susceptible to the lure of technology.

Let's work together to keep everyone safe on the roads. Remember: that text can wait and waiting just might save a life.

Play it safe. That text can wait.



While driving, turn phone to silent mode or pull over if the text can't wait.

2022 Member Photo Contest "Life in Rural Wisconsin"

**ENTER
NOW!**



CONTEST
OPEN UNTIL
AUGUST 22, 2022

For details, visit: www.cwecoop.com/member-photo-contest

SAVE THE DATE

**Member
Appreciation
Breakfast
October 29**