



Talbot County Health Department  
Office of Environmental Health  
28712 Glebe Road, Suite 4  
Easton, MD 21601  
410-770-6880

## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR FOOD SERVICE FACILITIES IN THE EVENT OF WEATHER RELATED EMERGENCIES IN TALBOT COUNTY**

All facilities should already have an emergency plan and contact phone numbers for all employees, managers and owners.

### **Food Safety:**

You may lose electricity and/or water or have flooding problems. **In either case, you must cease operation and close your facility immediately.** Without either electric or water, you cannot adequately wash-rinse-sanitize utensils, cook, wash hands or flush toilets. **Facilities affected by extended loss of power or flooding may be required to be inspected prior to re-opening.**

1. Keep walk-ins, refrigerators and freezer doors closed as much as possible to prevent the escape of cold air. If the power is out less than 2 hours, food will, in general, be safe.
  - a. Keeping refrigerator doors closed will keep food safe for approximately 4 hours.
  - b. Keeping freezer doors closed will keep food safe for approximately 48 hours. Full freezers will also help maintain cold temperatures.
  - c. Blocks of dry ice inside refrigerators or freezers will help maintain safe temperatures.
2. **As soon as the electric comes back on, check food temperatures inside refrigerators.**
3. NEVER TASTE FOOD to determine whether it's safe. If the temperature of the food is higher than 50° F, it is considered garbage and must be destroyed. Inventory everything for insurance purposes, and then dispose of the product in adequate garbage receptors. Arrange to have the garbage picked up as soon as possible.
4. If the food temperature is greater than 41°F but less than 50°F, rapidly cool it to 41°F or below, or use it right away.
5. If frozen food has thawed, but is still less than 41°F, it can be placed under refrigeration and used within 5 days. DO NOT refreeze anything that has thawed.
6. If your facility is prone to flooding, get all food and dry goods on shelves as high off the ground as possible.
7. In case of flooding, any food that comes into contact with flood waters is considered contaminated and must be discarded. The facility cannot re-open until floors, walls and equipment are thoroughly cleaned and sanitized.

8. Flooding may also cause contamination of your well. Do not drink the water until it is determined to be potable. If bacteria are found in the well, the well will have to be chlorinated and re-sampled until a potable sample is obtained. If the well terminal was submerged by floodwater at any time, this office will require that an acceptable bacterial sample is obtained by a private lab (list enclosed) prior to opening. Disinfection can be completed by either a licensed well driller or by following the enclosed instructions.
9. If you have questions, please call the health department at (410)770-6880. After normal working hours, contact Talbot County emergency management at (410) 822-0095 and have them contact the on-call sanitarian.
10. For more information, see the following websites: [www.fsis.usda.gov](http://www.fsis.usda.gov),  
Meat and Poultry hotline: 1-800-535-4555.

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