



Prepare an Emergency Kit

Another way to promote food safety is to optimize your emergency kit, food stores, and food accessories for power outages:

- Ensure you have bleach, already frozen ice cubes and/or gel packs, and contacts for obtaining dry ice for long-term outages.
- Food should be stored on shelves, relatively high off the floor to reduce chances of contamination by floodwater.
- Strategize food stores before the emergency by grouping foods together in the freezer, keeping coolers on hand for power outages >4 hours, and freezing food items not going to be used right away (this is a good way to prevent food waste, too).
- Have thermometers for your refrigerator and freezer and verify their temperatures are at or below 0° F and 40° F, respectively. Use the thermometers in power outages to determine the safety of their contents.
- The State of Georgia has created an online emergency planning tool at ready.ga.gov to keep important family information, such as medication lists, emergency contact information, family meeting places, and location of emergency supplies.



Resources for Food Safety and Natural Disasters

Call the Georgia Department of Public Health if you suspect a family member or you have become ill from food you have eaten.

**1-866-PUB-HLTH
(1-866-782-4584)**

Be on the lookout for common symptoms of food poisoning, such as:

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Fatigue
- Diarrhea
- Fever
- Chills

The Georgia Department of Agriculture and Department of Public Health partner together to ensure food safety during emergencies alongside local jurisdictions, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency, and federal agencies.



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Georgia Department of Agriculture Food Safety Division

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FOOD SAFETY & NATURAL DISASTERS

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
BEFORE, DURING & AFTER
AN EMERGENCY



Salvaging Foodstuffs

- ✓ Thawed food that still contains ice crystals can be refrozen or cooked.
- ✓ Freezers, if left unopened and full, will keep food safe for 48 hours (24 hours if half full).
- ✓ If cans have come in contact with floodwater or storm water, remove the labels, wash the cans, and dip them in a solution of 1 cup (8 oz/250 mL) of bleach in 5 gallons of water. Re-label the cans with a marker, including the expiration date.



For Your Safety

- ✓ Do NOT use contaminated water to wash dishes, brush your teeth, wash and prepare food, wash your hands, make ice, or make baby formula.
- ✓ You may want to help out feeding your neighbors, but please do not donate prepared food at shelters or mass feeding locations. Authorities cannot use any prepared food to feed the public.



When in Doubt, Throw it Out!

Deciding which Foods and Materials to Toss after Flooding

Remember the mantra, **“When in doubt, throw it out!”** When inspecting foods in your refrigerator and pantry after a power outage or flooding. If food preparation surfaces and/or food containers, utensils, and plateware are contaminated with storm water, be sure to follow these steps:

1. Wash with soap and warm, clean water,
2. Rinse with clean water,
3. Sanitize by immersing for 1 minute in a solution of 1 teaspoon of chlorine bleach (5.25%, unscented) per gallon of clean water, and
4. Allow to air-dry.

If a boil water advisory/order is issued, water should be brought to a rapid boil for 1-3 minutes.



Listed below are some of the most common (but not all) situations where you should throw away food items:

- Possible contact with flood or storm water.
- Unusual odor, color, or texture.
- Perishable foods (including meat, poultry, fish, eggs & leftovers) in your refrigerator when the power has been off for 4 hours or more.
- Canned foods that are bulging, opened, or damaged.
- Food containers that cannot be disinfected, such as those with screw-caps, snap-lids, crimped caps (soda pop bottles), twist caps, flip tops, snap-open, and home canned foods, should be discarded if they have come into contact with floodwater.
- Wooden cutting boards, baby bottle nipples, and pacifiers as these items cannot be properly sanitized if they have come into contact with floodwaters.