



Child Care Food Program

Providing Food Service During Emergencies

In the event of a natural or man-made emergency, the following recommendations can help you protect the safety of food and water at your child care facility.

Things to consider before an emergency:

- Store at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food (avoid foods that will make you thirsty like salted nuts and pretzels).
- Always freeze refrigerated foods that you may not need immediately.
- Freeze containers of water for ice to help keep food cold in the freezer, refrigerator and coolers.
- Group food together in the freezer – food will stay colder longer.
- Know where to obtain dry or regular ice.
- Know how to use dry ice properly.
- Use refrigerated foods first, then frozen, then fresh/non-perishable.
- Be sure to have enough water on hand for drinking, cooking, etc.

1. How long will the foods in the refrigerator and freezer be safe after the power goes off?

Refrigerator (41° F or below)

- Refrigerated foods can be kept safe for about 4 hours if refrigerator door remains closed. Remember you can't rely on appearance and odor.
- Always use an appliance thermometer.

Freezer (0° F or below)

- If door remains closed, frozen foods can be kept safe for about 48 hours if freezer is full – 24 hours if half full.
- Always use an appliance thermometer.

2. Can I refreeze foods that are partially or completely thawed?

If the appliance thermometer stored in the freezer reads 40° or below when the power comes back on, the food is safe and may be refrozen. Partial thawing and refreezing may reduce the quality of some food.

3. What is dry ice and how is it used?

- Dry ice is the solid form of the gas carbon dioxide (CO₂). Dry ice has a lower temperature than regular ice (frozen water). Dry ice is extremely cold (-109.3°F or -78.5°C).
- When using dry ice, handle with care. Use gloves, an oven mitt, or a folded towel as dry ice can burn the skin. Avoid breathing the gas.
- Do not eat dry ice.
- If using dry ice, 25 pounds of dry ice will keep a ten-cubic foot freezer below freezing for 3-4 days.

4. What are a few non-perishable (commercially canned or pre-packaged) foods that are cooked and can be eaten safely?

Meat/meat alternates

- Variety of canned and/or fresh pack meats such as tuna, chicken (choose low sodium)
- Beans
- Peanut butter
- Ravioli (look for product with Child Nutrition (CN) label)

Fruits

- Variety of canned and/or single serve fruits (choose fruits packed in original juice or light syrup)
- Variety of fruit juices (100% juice, pasteurized, vitamin C fortified) – cans, boxes, bottles
- Dried fruits

Vegetables

- Variety of canned vegetables (choose low sodium)
- Vegetable juices, e.g., V8

Grain/breads

- Soft tortillas
- Sandwich bread (extra can be kept on hand in freezer)
- Canned noodles in sauce
- Crackers (choose whole grain products)
- Ready-to-eat cereals (choose cereals with 10 grams or less sugar per serving)
- Ready-to-eat granola/cereal bars and toaster pastries

Milk

- Milk, Nonfat dry
- Ultra High Temperature (UHT box milk)

Water

- Bottled or
- Boiled

Food for infants

- A variety of ready-to-eat infant foods
- Milk based and soy based iron-fortified infant formulas

Other foods

- Mayonnaise or salad dressing condiment packets to mix with canned meats for immediate use.
- Sugar, jelly, salt, pepper

5. What are some non-food supplies I may need to store?

- Disposable meal service products – plates, utensils, napkins, cups
- Trash bags
- Hand sanitizer
- Paper towels
- Bleach
- Disinfectant wipes

6. What types of alternative cooking methods can be used if the power is out?

- Fireplace
- Outdoor grill
- Fuel-burning camp stove or charcoal burners
- Wood burning stoves

Alternative cooking methods must be used with appropriate caution. Use extreme care when using open flames.

Reduce the risk of fire or carbon monoxide poisoning, **do not use** equipment intended for outdoor cooking inside. For example, outdoor grill, fuel burning camp stoves or charcoal burners should never be used indoors.

Use a meat thermometer to ensure that food reaches a safe internal temperature.

- Roast (Beef, Pork and Ham) should be cooked to 145°F (with a 3 minute rest time)
- Poultry (ground and poultry dishes) should be cooked to 165°F
- Ground meat should be cooked to 160°F
- Fish should be cooked to 145°F; it should look opaque and flake easily

7. What are some easy sample menus?

Breakfast Ideas

- Ready-to-eat cereal, juice or canned fruit, milk (fresh if available, then reconstituted dry or UHT)
- Granola/cereal bar, juice or canned fruit, milk (fresh if available, then reconstituted dry or UHT)
- Toaster pastry, juice or canned fruit, milk (fresh if available, then reconstituted dry or UHT)

Lunch Ideas

- Tuna salad sandwich, canned peaches, apple juice, milk (fresh if available, then reconstituted dry or UHT)
- Soft tortilla, refried beans, corn, pineapple tidbits, milk (fresh if available, then reconstituted dry or UHT)
- Canned noodles in sauce with beans, pears, green beans, milk (fresh if available, then reconstituted dry or UHT)

Snack Ideas

- Crackers and oranges or grape-juice
- Cookies and pears
- Peanut butter crackers and orange juice

8. Water:

One gallon of water per person per day is recommended. Should individuals be put on a boil water notice, the Florida Department of Health (DOH) advises taking precautions against contaminated water, especially individuals with private wells.

DOH recommends one of the following when a boil water notice is issued:

- Use bottled water for drinking, or;
- Boil the water before drinking, holding it in a rolling boil for one minute; or
- Disinfect it by adding 8 drops of plain unscented household bleach per gallon of water, and then let it stand for 30 minutes. If the water is cloudy after 30 minutes, repeat the procedure.

For more information, see DOH web page, [Flooded Well Emergency Information](#).

9. Where can I find more information on how to prepare for emergencies?

- Visit the Florida Division of Emergency Management website, [Florida Disaster](#), for information and customized emergency plans that you can print out and save for future emergencies. Your plan will include steps you can take to save time and money in preparing your business for an emergency or disaster.
- Visit [USDA Food Safety and Inspection Services](#), “Fact Sheets” for Emergency Preparedness information in both English and Spanish.
- Visit DOH web page, [Emergency Preparedness & Response](#) for general information on emergency situations.
 - On the same web page, there are also child care center specific information under Community Preparedness, titled [Community Planners and Child Care Partners](#).
 - On the Prepare Yourself web page, there are specific information for [Children’s Disaster Preparedness](#), which provided tools and resources to assist families, community planners, schools and health care professionals.
 - Information on emergency response during hurricane and severe weather are available on DOH website, under Prepare Yourself, [Current Hazards](#).

