

**Madison County Health Department  
101 East Edwardsville Road  
Wood River, Illinois 62095  
(618) 692-7040, ext. 6079**

## **Guidelines For Food Safety During Power Outages**

### **What To Do When Your Freezer Fails**

When the electricity is off, a fully stocked freezer can potentially keep food frozen two days if the door remains closed. A half-full freezer can keep foods frozen about one day. If electric service will not be reconnected within one or two days...

- ❑ Keep the freezer door closed.
- ❑ If your friends have electricity, divide your frozen foods among their freezers.
- ❑ Seek freezer space in a store, church, school, or commercial meat locker or freezer that has electrical service.
- ❑ Know where you can buy dry ice and block ice. Dry ice freezes everything it touches; 25 pounds of it will keep a 10-cubic foot freezer below freezing for three to four days. When using dry ice, be sure to take several precautions. **Never touch dry ice with bare hands!** Also, do not stick your head into a freezer that contains dry ice. It gives off carbon dioxide, which replaces oxygen, so leave the door open a short time before examining your food.
- ❑ If food is still “cold to the touch”, it may be cooked and eaten immediately. Do not re-freeze thawed food.

### **What To Do When Your Refrigerator Fails**

When the power goes off, you can normally expect food inside a refrigerator to stay safely cold for four to six hours, depending on how warm your kitchen is.

- ❑ Add block ice to the refrigerator if the electricity is off longer than four to six hours.
- ❑ High-protein foods (dairy products, meat, fish, poultry) should be consumed as soon as possible if power is not restored immediately. They cannot be stored safely at room temperature.
- ❑ Fruits and vegetables can be kept safely at room temperature until there are obvious signs of spoilage (mold, slime, wilt).