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## **Health officials caution residents without power about food safety**

Officials with the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources Office of Environmental Health Services are concerned about food safety.

Director of OEHS Barbara Taylor said "It's important for residents who have been without electrical power or back-up generators to dispose of any perishable food items that have been stored at temperatures greater than 41 degrees Fahrenheit for longer than 4 hours to help eliminate the possibility of food contamination. Foodborne illness can be serious and poses significant health risks."

Taylor said that in addition to individuals and families, supermarkets, convenience stores and restaurant owners need to be cautious too. Taylor said, "When in doubt, throw it out."

Taylor offered the following tips to help ensure your food is safe while waiting for electricity to be restored:

1. Destroy all perishable foods requiring refrigeration if their temperature has been above 41 degrees Fahrenheit for more than 4 hours.
2. Frozen foods in a closed freezer should remain frozen up to 24 hours after losing electrical power. After 24 hours, if the food is still partially frozen, it should be safe to refreeze.
3. Destroy all frozen foods that have thawed and have been stored at temperatures above the 41 degrees Fahrenheit danger zone for more than four hours.

More information about food safety is available online at [www.wvdhhr.org/oehs/phs](http://www.wvdhhr.org/oehs/phs) or by calling your local health department.

The mission of the Center for Threat Preparedness is to ensure adequate capacity and effective systems ready to respond to natural and intentional threats to the public's health through collaborative leadership and coordination.

More information about CTP is available at <http://www.healthprep.wv.gov>.