



PRESS RELEASE

October 18, 2019

News Media Contact:

Jackie Ruiz, MPH
Public Information Officer
(805) 896-1057 (cell)
jacruiz@sbcphd.org

PROTECT YOUR HEALTH AND BE PREPARED FOR A POWER SAFETY POWER SHUTOFF (PSPS) *Health Considerations for Persons Dependent on Electricity and Food Safety Guidelines*

(SANTA BARBARA, Calif.) – The Santa Barbara County Public Health Department reminds residents to take the necessary precautions and check on neighbors, friends, and family who may need assistance before, during, and after a Power Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) to ensure health and safety. A PSPS could lead to multi-day outages in areas of Santa Barbara County, and residents need to be prepared to endure 3-5 days without power. See below for health considerations for persons dependent on electricity, and general food safety guidelines before, during, and after a PSPS.

What if I depend on electricity for a medical device?

During a PSPS, all customers serviced by an affected power line will have their power shut off. If you rely on electric or battery dependent devices, such as an oxygen concentrator, ventilator, electric wheelchair, home dialysis machine, or use refrigerated medications, it is critical that you have a plan in place for a multi-day power outage. You may need to move to a location with electricity during the outage. If you rely on electricity to maintain your health, we encourage you to get ready using [Preparing for Power Outage: Persons Dependent on Electricity](#) (see attachment).

Can I consume refrigerated foods during and after a power outage?

Your refrigerator will keep food safe for up to 4 hours during a power outage. Keep the door closed as much as possible. Eat food from fridge first, freezer second and non-perishable items last.

After 4 hours without power, dispose of refrigerated perishable food such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and leftovers. Other items will have to be evaluated individually. Find general guidelines about individual items at [Refrigerated Food and Power Outages](#) (see attachment). **When in doubt, throw it out!**

How long will frozen foods be safe during and after a power outage?

Your full freezer will hold a safe temperature for about 48 hours and a half full freezer will remain safe for 24 hours *if the door remains closed*. Never taste food to determine its safety. Find general guidelines about individual items at [Frozen Food and Power Outages](#) (see attachment). **When in doubt, throw it out!**

For more information on preparing for PSPS and to sign up for up for Aware and Prepare Alerts, visit www.readysbc.org.



Preparing for Power Outage: Persons Dependent on Electricity

Power outages can occur for a variety of reasons including earthquake, winter storm, or Public Safety Power Shut-off (PSPS). Putting together a power outage plan now can help protect your health and safety in the event of a power failure.

1 Take an inventory of items you need that rely on electricity

This can include: oxygen concentrator, CPAP, wheelchairs, garage door, refrigerated medications, elevator, ventilator, at-home dialysis, and many other devices.

2 Assemble a power outage kit

- Battery operated flashlights or lanterns
- Back-up batteries for electrical equipment (keep these charged, even unused batteries lose power)
- Back-up oxygen tank, tubing, and mask
- Car charger for devices and external battery pack to charge phone
- Cash in small bills

These items are in addition to your general disaster supplies. Get information on general disaster supply kits at: www.ready.gov/build-a-kit

3 Sign-up for alerts!

Sign up for Santa Barbara County emergency notifications and alerts at www.readysbc.org and Nixle (text your zip code to 888777).

4 Call your local power company

If you are dependent on a medical device, be sure to register with your power company. Ask about the medical baseline program.

- SCE: Update your online account or call 1-800-447-6620
- PG&E: Update your online account at pge.com or call 1-800-743-5000

5 Talk with your healthcare provider and medical device provider

Talk to your healthcare provider, home health, or hospice agency about your power outage plan.

- Find out how long your medications will be OK without refrigeration; get specific guidance for critical medications

Ask your medical equipment provider and/or home health provider about their plans to assist you in emergencies:

- Get daytime and after-hours emergency phone numbers for your provider

6 Plan for back-up power

Remember: Hospitals should not be a source of electrical support or oxygen during a power outage.

- Read your medical equipment manual and identify options you have for back-up power
- Purchase back-up batteries, if possible, for your device and keep them charged

7 Plan where you will go in the event of an outage and arrange transportation

- Plan for a local and out of area location where you can access power
- Identify what transportation you will use to go to a location with electricity
- Keep car gas tanks at least half full
- Gas stations cannot pump gas during outages

8 Establish your support team in advance (family, caregiver, friends)

- Plan how you will communicate with your team - phones may not work
- Complete **My Power Outage Emergency Plan** (reverse side) with list of team and important phone numbers

9 Consider owning a home generator and know how to use it

- Learn how to use and maintain the generator ahead of time
- Have an adequate fuel supply and store it safely
- Always use the generator outdoors, at least 20 feet away from a window

10 Practice your plan with your support team

Brought to you by:



My Power Outage Emergency Plan

Type of Medical Equipment:

Brand/Model #:

Back-up batteries will last for (hrs):

Flashlight is located:

O2 tank is located & will last for (hrs):

O2 tubing/mask is located:

Can you hook up O2 tubing without assistance?:

Yes

No

Medical Equipment Provider Information

Medical Equipment Provider Name:

Daytime Phone#:

After-hours

Emergency Phone #:

Personal Care Provider Information

(e.g. Home Health, Hospice, Dialysis, Caregiver)

Name of agency/provider:

Daytime Phone#:

After-hours

Emergency Phone #:

My Support Team & Where I Will Go During an Outage

Local:

Name:

Phone:

Generator?

Yes

No

Address:

Out-of-Area:

Name:

Phone:

Address:

Generator Information

Wattage:

Fuel

Type:

Fuel Use per hour:

What will generator power?

(refrigerator, O2 concentrator, etc.)

Frozen Food and Power Outages: When to Save It and When to Throw It Out

Type of food	Contains ice crystals and feels cold as if refrigerated	Thawed and held above 40°F for more than 2 hours
Meat, poultry, seafood		
Meat, poultry, seafood – all types of cuts	Refreeze	Discard
stews, soups	Refreeze	Discard
Dairy		
Milk	Refreeze (some loss of texture)	Discard
Eggs (out of shell) and egg products	Refreeze	Discard
Ice cream, frozen yogurt	Discard	Discard
Cheese (soft and semi-soft)	Refreeze (some loss of texture)	Discard
Hard cheeses	Refreeze	Refreeze
Shredded cheeses	Refreeze	Discard
Cheesecake	Refreeze	Discard
Fruits		
Juices	Refreeze	Refreeze. (discard if mold, yeasty smell, or sliminess develops)
Home or commercially packaged	Refreeze (will change texture and flavor)	Refreeze (discard if mold, yeasty smell, or sliminess develops)
Vegetables		
Juices	Refreeze	Discard after held above 40°F for 6 hours
Home or commercially packaged	Refreeze (may suffer texture	Discard after held above 40°F

Type of food	Contains ice crystals and feels cold as if refrigerated	Thawed and held above 40°F for more than 2 hours
or blanched	and flavor loss)	for 6 hours
Breads and pastries		
Breads, rolls, muffins, cakes (without custard fillings)	Refreeze	Refreeze
Cakes, pies, pastries with custard or cheese filling	Refreeze	Discard
Pie crusts, commercial and homemade bread dough	Refreeze (some quality loss may occur)	Refreeze (quality loss is considerable)
Other Foods		
Casseroles: pasta, rice-based	Refreeze	Discard
Flour, cornmeal, nuts	Refreeze	Refreeze
Breakfast items: waffles, pancakes, bagels	Refreeze	Refreeze
Frozen meal, entree, specialty item (pizza, sausage and biscuit, meat pie, convenience foods)	Refreeze	Discard

Refrigerated Food and Power Outages: When to Save It and When to Throw It Out

Type of Food	Held above 40 °F for more than 2 hours
Meat, poultry, seafood	
Raw or leftover cooked meat, poultry, fish, or seafood; soy meat substitutes	Discard
Thawing meat or poultry	Discard
Salads: Meat, tuna, shrimp, chicken, or egg salad	Discard
Gravy, stuffing, broth	Discard
Lunchmeats, hot dogs, bacon, sausage, dried beef	Discard
Pizza with any topping	Discard
Canned hams labeled "Keep Refrigerated"	Discard
Canned meats and fish, opened	Discard
Casseroles, soups, stews	Discard
Cheese	
Soft cheeses: blue/bleu, Roquefort, Brie, Camembert, cottage, cream, Edam, Monterey Jack, ricotta, mozzarella, Muenster, Neufchatel, queso blanco, queso fresco	Discard
Hard cheeses: Cheddar, Colby, Swiss, Parmesan, provolone, Romano	Keep
Processed cheeses	Keep
Shredded cheeses	Discard
Low-fat cheeses	Discard
Grated Parmesan, Romano, or combination (in can or jar)	Keep

Type of Food	Held above 40 °F for more than 2 hours
Dairy	
Milk, cream, sour cream, buttermilk, evaporated milk, yogurt, eggnog, soy milk	Discard
Butter, margarine	Keep
Baby formula, opened	Discard
Eggs	
Fresh eggs, hard-cooked in shell, egg dishes, egg products	Discard
Custards and puddings, quiche	Discard
Fruits	
Fresh fruits, cut	Discard
Fresh fruits, uncut	Keep
Fruit juices, opened	Keep
Canned fruits, opened	Keep
Dried fruits, raisins, candied fruits, dates	Keep
Sliced or shredded coconut	Discard
Sauces, Spreads, Jams	
Opened mayonnaise, tartar sauce, horseradish	Discard (if above 50 °F for more than 8 hrs)
Peanut butter	Keep
Jelly, relish, taco sauce, mustard, catsup, olives, pickles	Keep
Worcestershire, soy, barbecue, hoisin sauces	Keep
Fish sauces, oyster sauce	Discard
Opened vinegar-based dressings	Keep
Opened creamy-based dressings	Discard
Spaghetti sauce, opened	Discard
Bread, cakes, cookies, pasta, grains	
Bread, rolls, cakes, muffins, quick breads, tortillas	Keep

Type of Food	Held above 40 °F for more than 2 hours
Refrigerator biscuits, rolls, cookie dough	Discard
Cooked pasta, rice, potatoes	Discard
Pasta salads with mayonnaise or vinaigrette	Discard
Fresh pasta	Discard
Cheesecake	Discard
Breakfast foods: waffles, pancakes, bagels	Keep
Pies and pastry	
Cream filled pastries	Discard
Pies: custard, cheese-filled, or chiffon; quiche	Discard
Fruit pies	Keep
Vegetables	
Fresh vegetables, cut	Discard
Fresh vegetables, uncut	Keep
Fresh mushrooms, herbs, spices	Keep
Greens, pre-cut, pre-washed, packaged	Discard
Vegetables, cooked	Discard
Tofu, cooked	Discard
Vegetable juice, opened	Discard
Baked potatoes	Discard
Commercial garlic in oil	Discard
Potato salad	Discard
Casseroles, soups, stews	Discard