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Helpful Info for After Power Outage

Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department recommends the following for preventing foodborne illnesses. Take care of your health by discarding foods that could spoil after a power outage:

- Discard any perishable foods that have been without refrigeration and above 45°F for more than two hours.
- Discard any perishable food that is above 45°F for more than two hours.
- Food items that can be kept for a limited time without refrigeration include: Hard processed cheese such as cheddar, Swiss, Parmesan and Romano; Butter, margarine; Opened fruit juices, canned fruits, vinegar-based dressings, peanut butter, jellies, mustards; Breads, rolls, cakes, muffins, waffles, pancakes, bagels, fruit pies, fruit, herbs, spices and raw vegetables.
- After power is returned, it is acceptable to re-freeze frozen foods that still contain ice crystals and are 45°F or lower. This may result in a reduction in the quality of the product.
- As a general rule, a well-functioning freezer that is unopened and at least half-full will maintain foods at 45°F or lower for about 24 hours.
- Do not taste food to determine if it can be kept or should be thrown out.
- Evaluate each food item separately.
- **If in doubt, throw it out!**

Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department recommends that you use generators correctly to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning: Generators used correctly can provide power to your home or business. Used incorrectly, carbon monoxide shed by a generator can very quickly threaten your health and life.

Avoid carbon monoxide threats by:

- Not burning charcoal inside homes, garages, etc.
- Not burning charcoal in your fireplace inside your home.
- Not using any gasoline-powered equipment inside your homes.
- Not using a gas oven to heat your home, even for a short time.
- Not idling a car in your garage, even with the garage door open.
- Not using an unvented kerosene heater inside.

Find additional helpful information about generators, and how to prevent harm from carbon monoxide at - <http://www.tpchd.org/page.php?id=402>.

COLD WEATHER TIPS

- Protect Plumbing.
- To prevent freezing, allow faucets to drip to maintain adequate water flow when faucets are connected to pipes that run through an unheated space.
- Keep sink cabinet doors open to allow heat to reach exposed piping.
- Check the attics and crawl space to ensure water pipes, including fire sprinkler pipes, are insulated. Pipes near crawl space vent or attic vent openings are the most vulnerable.
- Remove hoses and cover exposed exterior faucets.
- When pipes freeze, water only trickles out or will not come out at all when a faucet is turned on. Turn off the water at the main shut-off valve immediately to prevent water pipe bursting, a major source of flooding.
- Plug the drafts and optimize heating.
- The exterior of the house is the first line of defense against drafts.
- Caulk, seal, foam, and weather-strip around all seams, cracks, and openings.
- Change furnace filters frequently.
- Clogged filters reduce airflow through the heating/cooling system, forcing the unit to work less efficiently.
- After a snowfall, use snow “pushers” (shovels) to clear away snow on driveways and walkways. A large chisel garden tool is great for getting under tough layers of ice.
- Melt ice by using a hand-held or push spreader to evenly distribute rock salt, calcium chloride pellets or sand.
- Rock salt is the most common and probably the most cost effective.
- Keep in mind, salt is harmful to concrete surfaces, plants, flowers, and shrubs and corrosive to metals, except stainless steel.
- Temperature greatly affects how well it melts. The colder it is, the less it melts.
- Calcium chloride pellets are more costly than rock salt, have a minor effect on plants, and will melt ice at temperatures as low as minus 20 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Sand gives some improvement in traction, but can be tracked into the interior of your home if applied to sidewalks. Just make sure to wipe your feet before coming inside.
- After snow or extreme cold, check to ensure no physical damage has occurred around the house.
- Always wear proper safety equipment such as heavy boots, gloves, safety chaps, and safety goggles when clearing fallen tree limbs and other debris.
- Stay away from downed or dangling power lines.
- Ensure your chainsaw is equipped with an anti-kickback chain that is well sharpened.
- Loose or dangling clothing that could become caught in moving parts should not be worn.
- Use portable generators outdoors in a well-ventilated area. Carbon monoxide produced by the engine can be deadly, so use a carbon monoxide detector to protect family members.
- Take special precautions when operating fuel-burning unvented space heaters.

- Consider potential effects of indoor air pollution if you use an unvented kerosene or gas space heater.
- Follow the manufacturer's directions, especially instructions on the proper fuel and keeping the heater properly adjusted.

TIPS FOR THE PETS

- Keep your cat(s) inside. Outdoors, felines can freeze, become lost, or be stolen, injured or killed. Cats who are allowed to stray are exposed to infectious diseases, including rabies, from other cats, dogs, and wildlife.
- During the winter, outdoor cats sometimes sleep under the hoods of cars. When the motor is started, the cat can be injured or killed by the fan belt. If there are outdoor cats in your area, bang loudly on the car hood before starting the engine to give the cat a chance to escape.
- Never let your dog off the leash on snow or ice, especially during a snowstorm. Dogs can lose their scent and easily become lost.
- More dogs are lost during the winter than during any other season, so make sure yours always wear their ID tags and pet licenses.
- Thoroughly wipe off your dog's legs and stomach when it comes in out of the sleet, snow or ice, as it can ingest salt, antifreeze, or other potentially dangerous chemicals while licking its paws. Paw pads may also bleed from snow or encrusted ice.
- Never shave your dog down to the skin in winter, as a longer coat will provide more warmth.
- When you bathe your dog in the colder months, be sure to completely dry him before taking him out for a walk.

Own a shorthaired breed?

- Consider getting him a coat or sweater with a high collar or turtleneck with coverage from the base of the tail to the belly.
- For many dogs, this is regulation winter wear.
- Never leave your dog or cat alone in the car during cold weather.
- A car can act as a refrigerator in the winter, holding in the cold and causing the animal to freeze to death.
- Puppies do not tolerate the cold as well as adult dogs and may be difficult to housebreak during the winter. If your puppy appears to be sensitive to the weather, you may opt to paper train him inside.
- If your dog is sensitive to the cold due to age, illness, or breed type, take him outdoors only to relieve himself.
- Does your dog spend a lot of time engaged in outdoor activities? Increase his supply of food, particularly protein, to keep him and his fur in tip-top shape.
- Coolant and antifreeze is a lethal poison for dogs and cats. Be sure to thoroughly clean up any spills from your vehicle.
- Consider using products that contain propylene glycol rather than ethylene glycol. Visit the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center for more information.
- Make sure your companion animal has a warm place to sleep, off the floor and away from all drafts. A cozy dog or cat bed with a warm blanket or pillow is perfect.

How to make a disaster kit

When it comes to a disaster, is your family prepared? Prepare a disaster kit for your home, work, car, and don't forget to include your pets. Prepare for 5-7 days so you'll be sure to have enough.

Basic Home Kit can include:

- Water (a quart to a gallon per person per day)
- Food (baby food, special diets, and snacks)
- Manual can opener
- Clothing (seasonal, rain gear), socks, sturdy shoes, work gloves, hard hat
- Blankets, pillows, tent, tarps
- Toiletries
 - ✓ Soap
 - ✓ Towels
 - ✓ Shaving kit
 - ✓ Tooth paste
 - ✓ Mouthwash
 - ✓ Toilet paper
 - ✓ Feminine products
 - ✓ Diapers
- Extra pair of eye glasses
- Pop-up wet wipes
- Extra batteries
- Large and small plastic bags
- Water purification tablets
- Important documents in waterproof container, paper, pen
 - ✓ ID
 - ✓ Prescriptions
 - ✓ Insurance
 - ✓ Emergency contact phone numbers
 - ✓ Recent photos of family members and pets
- AM / FM radio / NOAA Weather Radio
- Cash (with some small bills), credit cards
- Tool kit
- Extra keys for house and car
- Matches and alternative lighting
- ABC type fire extinguisher
- First Aid kit
- Pet Care Disaster Kit
- Games, toys, puzzles, books

A disaster could make it difficult to communicate and for response units to get to you in the event of an emergency.

If you are away from home, you may have to rely on the supplies you have with you. Pack enough for each family member.

- Food
- Water
- First Aid kit, medications
- Blanket or sleeping bag
- Rain gear, coat
- Extra clothes, sturdy shoes
- Flashlight, batteries
- ABC type fire extinguisher
- Matches and candles
- Plastic siphoning hose with hand pump (available at auto center)
- Spare hide a keys

***Always keep automobile gas tank at least ½ full**

First Aid Kit

Consider including these items in your First Aid kit. Build it as large as you see fit for the situation. i.e. Home, Car, Work, etc.

Wound Care items:

- ✓ Triangular bandages
- ✓ Elastic Bandages
- ✓ Roller Gauze
- ✓ Medical tape
- ✓ 2" x 2" gauze dressings
- ✓ 4" x 4" gauze dressings
- ✓ Band aids
- ✓ Soap or Wound Care cleaning wipes
- ✓ Antiseptic or Antibiotic ointment

Miscellaneous:

- ✓ Eye wash solution
- ✓ Cold Packs
- ✓ Non Aspirin pain reliever
- ✓ Anti diarrhea medication
- ✓ Antacid
- ✓ Sunscreen
- ✓ Tongue depressors (finger splints)
- ✓ Oral Thermometer
- ✓ Bandage scissors
- ✓ Tweezers
- ✓ Surgical masks, non latex gloves, CPR mask
- ✓ First Aid Manual