FOOD SAFETY DURING POWER OUTAGES

BE PREPARED:
• Keep a thermometer in refrigerator to ensure 41°F or below
• Make sure freezer is maintained below 0°F
• Freeze containers of water for use in the refrigerator or freezer to help keep food cold during an outage
• Keep extra food such as milk, meat and poultry in the freezer as a reserve
• Have a supply of canned and pre-packaged food available for prolonged outages
• Have adequate supply of water for consumption, dishwashing, and hand washing; one gallon per person per day.

WHEN THE POWER GOES OUT:
• Keep refrigerator and freezer closed to maintain temperature inside (food can be kept cold in a refrigerator 4-6 hours and frozen 1-2 days in a freezer)
• Throw out any food that has been out of temperature longer than 4 hours
• Store bags or containers of ice in both the refrigerator and freezer to keep potentially hazardous foods cold
• If you plan to eat refrigerated or frozen meat, poultry, fish, or eggs while they are still at acceptable temperatures (41°F or below), ensure they are fully cooked

WHEN THE POWER IS RESTORED:
*Remember, you cannot rely on the appearance or odor to determine if food will make someone sick
• Determine the safety of the food
• Check temperature of refrigerator to ensure food is 41°F or below
• Food may be safely refrozen if it still contains ice crystals or is at 41°F or below
• No matter what the cost of the food, it should be thrown out if it has not been stored at proper temperature.
• Foodborne illnesses can cause vomiting, diarrhea, doctor’s visits and lost work days. When bacteria grow on food, it can produce toxins or multiply to levels that cannot be made safe by cooking.

For more information on food safety, please contact Sacramento County Environmental Management Department at (916) 875-8440 or visit our website at www.emd.saccounty.net