

Safety News from the Northport Fire Department

By Jim Mahoney

Storms and Safe Food

The beautiful sunny days with crisp air and low humidity seem to lure the possibility of seasonal storms that can cause power failure with loss of electricity to home refrigeration and food freezers. Long term loss of electricity can cause food borne illness if the proper precautions are not taken to keep food bacteria free.

The February 2012 issue of *Johns Hopkins Health After 50* carried a practical and helpful list of suggestions to keep your food safe when the power goes out. For your information and future reference Safety News repeats this list below;

1 Take your refrigerator's temperature. Keep an appliance thermometer in your refrigerator to make sure the temperature is always set at 40 degrees Fahrenheit or lower. Your freezer's temperature should never rise above 0 degrees Fahrenheit.

2 Throw out perishables that have been in the refrigerator longer than four hours after its temperature has risen above 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Meat, poultry, dairy products, eggs, deli items, pizza, casseroles, soups, stews and other leftovers -- they all must go.

3 Take your food's temperature. If you're still hesitant to throw out food, use an instant-read food thermometer to test the food's internal temperature, which should be 40 degrees Fahrenheit or below.

4 Toss anything in your freezer that's thawed. You can safely keep items in your freezer for 48 hours if it's full and 24 hours if it's half full as long as you keep the door closed. If ice crystals have formed on your food or its packaging, you can safely refreeze it.

5 Group frozen foods together in the freezer. Foods stay frozen longer if they're packed closely.

6 Don't risk a taste test. Tasting or smelling food is no way to decide if it's okay to eat; most bacteria don't leave an odor or a bad taste.

7 Don't substitute the great outdoors for your refrigerator. You may think it's a smart idea to keep food cold outside in the snow and ice, but it's not: Even though the outside temperature may be below freezing, the sun warms your food to unsafe and uneven levels. Plus, you risk contamination by animals or unsanitary conditions.

8 Do go ahead and bring the outdoors in. Keep a cooler on hand so you can pack it with snow or ice and store your food in it.

9 Make your own ice. Fill containers with water and place them outside to freeze and put in the refrigerator later.

10 Take action now to stock up on bottled water and nonperishables for later. Keep a three-day supply on hand. Cereal, energy bars, nuts, peanut butter, cans of tuna, apples, bananas, dried fruit mixes, powdered milk and juice containers are all good choices to help get you through a long outage.

Safety News gratefully acknowledges these suggestions from the Johns Hopkins Health Alerts.

Flu Season

Each year thousands of Americans suffer from the flu and a significant number die. The incidence of heart attacks rises to nearly 30% more than normal at the height of the flu season. Since the flu is a communicable disease, it is recommended children six months of age and up and senior citizens (are strongly urged) to get this immunization. The Visiting Nurse Service at 505 Main Street Northport offers a number of flu clinics;

Saturday, Sept. 29 9 am-12 noon

Tuesday, Oct. 2 3 pm – 6 pm

Saturday, Oct. 13 9 am – 12 noon

Wednesday, Oct. 17 3 pm – 6 pm

Saturday, Oct 20 9 am – 12 noon

Saturday, Oct 27 9 am – 12 noon

The fee is \$30 for non Medicare B and Medicaid enrollees. Receipts will be given to people to submit to their insurance companies. Any questions should be directed to Ms Patty VanDyke at 631-261-7200. PLEASE NOTE: THE FLU VACCINE WILL NOT BE ADMINISTERED TO PREGNANT WOMEN.

A Travel Tip

When staying in hotels/motels, take along a disinfectant wipe for the TV remote control and light switches. The October 2012 Consumer Reports on Health states that these two room items are the germiest [sic] surfaces in the premises. And the best disinfectant is the regular washing of the hands.

Carve With Care

The October 2012 Consumers Reports on Health urges caution for all people carving pumpkins. Serrated knives should be used and carving should be done with a downward stroke. Children should not carve their own pumpkins. When trick or treating later in October, flashlights or LED lights should be used. Lit candles pose too much of a hazard for the children and should not be used.

E.D.I.T.H.

The Town of Huntington will observe E.D.I.T.H. Drill on Wednesday, October 17th at 7pm. This emergency exit plan started in Northport with Chief Fred Loggia in the early 1980's. Take some time to prepare an exit plan and practice this exit plan. Safety News urges all adults to anticipate and prepare for fire emergencies rather than react to emergencies.

Coming Event

The Northport Fire Department is proud to host the annual Open House and Poster Contest Awards Ceremony on Friday, October 26th, 7:30 pm at fire headquarters (204 Main Street). Watch for more details in the October issue of Safety News.