



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

## Greene County Combined Health District

Melissa Howell, MS, MBA, MPH, RN, RS, Health Commissioner

Robert P. Dillaplain, MD, Medical Director

# Press Release

For Immediate Release

May 27, 2015

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## Power Outage Leads to Questions about Food Safety

*Public Health Officials provide answers about food waste & disposal*

(XENIA, OH) — With some households, restaurants, and businesses left without electricity after the storm and tornado yesterday in the Beavercreek area, Environmental Health professionals at Greene County Public Health are providing the following recommendations to help minimize the potential for foodborne illnesses due to the power outages. Power failures pose an additional risk where food supplies may become contaminated, damaged or spoiled.

- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible. A freezer that is half full will hold up to 24 hours and a full freezer for 48 hours.
- Pack refrigerated milk, dairy products, meats, fish, poultry, eggs, gravy, stuffing and left-overs into a cooler surrounded by ice.
- Butter/margarine, hard and processed cheeses, canned fruits and fresh fruits, fresh mushrooms, herbs and spices, fruit pies, breads/rolls/cakes/etc., opened jelly/relish/mustard/catsup/taco & barbeque sauces may all be kept.
- Any refrigerated perishable foods held above 41° F for over 2-4 hours should be discarded. Mayonnaise, tartar sauce and horseradish held at 50° F or more for over 8 hours should be discarded.
- NEVER taste a food to determine its safety and do not eat any food you think may be unsafe. Safest approach is **WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT.**
- Food that still contain ice crystals or is 41° F or less may be refrozen.
- If raw food has leaked during thawing, clean and disinfect the areas the food has touched.
- Restaurants, and any other business selling perishable food items must discard any such food items that have been above 41° F for more than 4 hours. Such food items shall not be used in any fashion and must be discarded. Thawed frozen foods may be used **ONLY** if the food has not been above 41° F for more than 4 hours. Just because a food service operation has lights, may not mean they are open and ready to serve food. If they have been without power for over 48 hours, they will likely need to discard food, clean and disinfect their facilities, and have new food supplies delivered prior to being ready to serve you.

For further questions, please contact Greene County Public Health for guidance. Prevent potential foodborne illnesses by throwing away any food that is in doubt.

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Handouts providing more detailed information are available from Greene County Public Health by stopping by our office at 360 Wilson Drive in Xenia. You can also obtain the handout from our website at [http://www.gcchd.org/files/resources/Help\\_the\\_power\\_is\\_out.pdf](http://www.gcchd.org/files/resources/Help_the_power_is_out.pdf).

For additional information, please contact Environmental Health Services at (937) 374-5606.

**Greene County Public Health – Your Center for Public Health Services  
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