KEEPING FOOD SAFE AFTER A NATURAL DISASTER OR POWER OUTAGE

Food may not be safe to eat during and after an emergency. Middle Brook Regional Health Department can make specific recommendations regarding the safety of food subject to possible contamination due to a natural disaster or power outage.

**Identify and throw away food that may not be safe to eat.**

- Throw away food that may not be safe to eat.
- Throw way food that has an unusual odor, color, or texture.
- Throw away perishable foods (including meat, poultry, fish, eggs and leftovers) that have been above 40 degrees Fahrenheit (F) for 2 hours or more.
- Thawed food that contains ice crystals or is 40 degrees F or below an be refrozen or cooked.
- Throw away canned foods that are bulging, opened, damaged, or came in contact with flood water.
- Food containers with screw-caps, snap-lids, crimped caps (soda pop bottles), twist caps, flip tops, snap-open, and home canned foods should be discarded if they have come into contact with floodwater because they cannot be disinfected.
- Do not use contaminated water to wash dishes, brush your teeth, wash and prepare food, wash your hands, make ice, or make baby formula.

**Store food safely.**

- While the power is out, keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible.
- Add block ice or dry ice to your refrigerator if the electricity is expected to be off longer than 4 hours. Wear heavy gloves when handling ice.

**Handle food safely.**

- If there is no water available for hand washing, use alcohol based hand sanitizer.