

Evaluating and Handling Food and Drinks

- ◆ Check each food or drink item in your home to determine whether it is safe to consume.
- ◆ **Do not taste any food or drink you think is spoiled! If in doubt, throw it out!**

Throw away

- ◆ All food—even canned goods—and drinks that have been in contact with floodwater
- ◆ Meat, poultry, fish, seafood, eggs, milk, leftovers, soft cheese, refrigerator rolls and biscuits, and other potentially hazardous foods that have been above 40 degrees F for 2 hours or longer
- ◆ Food that has an unusual odor, color, or texture
- ◆ Cans of food that are bulging, opened, dented, or damaged
- ◆ Food or drinks in containers with screw-caps, snap-lids, crimped caps (as on soft drink bottles), twist caps, or flip tops that have come in contact with floodwater

Disposing of unsafe food

- ◆ **If the garbage collection service is in operation:**
 - Wrap the food tightly in plastic wrap or aluminum foil and place it in a container with a tight-fitting lid.
 - Store the container in an area away from people and animals until it can be collected by your garbage collection service.
- ◆ **If the garbage collection service is not in operation:**
 - Bury the food at least 4 feet deep to prevent animals from digging it up.

- Bury it in an area that will not be disturbed in the near future and is away from the nearest water well or other open water source (creek, stream, or pond).
- If you cannot bury the food, burn it. Contact local law enforcement officials to learn of county burning laws.

Freezer items

- ◆ After a power loss, if the freezer temperature was at 0 degrees F or below, a full, well-functioning freezer should be able to keep foods frozen for **2 days**.
- ◆ A freezer that is only half full will keep foods frozen for about **1 day**.
- ◆ If the freezer has an appliance thermometer, check the temperature when the power is restored. If the temperature is 40 degrees F or lower, the food is safe to eat and may be refrozen.
- ◆ Some foods may lose their texture or flavor when refrozen.
- ◆ If the food in the freezer has begun to thaw, check each item to see if it is safe to eat.
- ◆ Most foods and beverages that have ice crystals, except for ice cream and frozen yogurt, can be refrozen.
- ◆ Throw out any food, except hard cheese, that has thawed and has been at 40 degrees F or warmer for 2 or more hours. Hard cheese may be refrozen.
- ◆ Do not rely on taste or smell to decide if something is safe to eat!

