Natural disasters and emergencies frequently cause power outages that can compromise the quality and safety of food and water sources. Food inspectors can reduce food safety risks by following these simple tips.

**TIP 1**

**Inspect for signs of spoilage and contamination.**

- Conduct inspections at every stage of the food supply chain to identify instances of improper time or temperature management that could impact the safety of food for human consumption.
- Check temperature loggers and visible signs of thawing and exposure to temperatures in the danger zone between 5 °C and 60 °C.
- Assess the type and extent of contamination and spoilage of food. Pay special attention to signs of thawing, leaking liquids, and unhygienic handling of food. Clearly label unsafe food and food preparation areas as unfit for human consumption.

**TIP 2**

**Inform food suppliers and vendors about food safety.**

- Advise on what may be used, sold or discarded.
  - Food in cans and jars and dried food and bottled drinks are safe to consume.
  - Safe food stored in a refrigerator remains safe if the power outage is less than four hours and the refrigerator remains closed.
- If food smells bad, changes colour or becomes slimy, it may not be safe for human consumption. This may include:
  - Meat, poultry, fish and eggs that have been exposed to temperatures above 5 °C for more than two hours.
  - Items stored in refrigerators, including bottled beverages that have been contaminated by fluids or juices from raw meat.
- Contamination may occur without visible signs. When in doubt, throw it out — or ask someone else to do it.

**Give instructions for how to delay defrosting while maintaining good hygiene.**

- Organize frozen food in half-full freezers into groups.
- Fill a partly empty freezer with creased paper for added insulation.
- Cover freezers with blankets or cardboard.
- Always use gloves when handling dry ice.

For more information, please visit The Five Keys to Safer Food Programme recommended by the World Health Organization: https://www.who.int/activities/promoting-safe-food-handling
Instruct on measures to maintain food safety.

Provide instructions on how to ensure that safe food is protected.

A full freezer will maintain its temperature for about 48 hours (24 hours if half full).

Food with high water content stays frozen longer than food with low water content.

Thawed food items must not be refrozen unless they clearly retain ice crystals.

Instruct food suppliers and vendors to discard unsalvageable food.

- Label any food deemed unsafe for human consumption.
- Use signs that clearly convey danger, especially at food storage facilities.
- If necessary, ensure that compromised and contaminated food is made inaccessible to the public.
- Document the location of disposed food and keep a record of it.

TIP 4

Inform the public about food safety risks and measures.

Share key messages with local authorities and media to inform the public about the five keys to safer food:

1. Keep clean
2. Separate raw and cooked food
3. Cook thoroughly
4. Keep food at safe temperatures
5. Use safe water and raw ingredients

For more information, please visit The Five Keys to Safer Food Programme recommended by the World Health Organization: https://www.who.int/activities/promoting-safe-food-handling