WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT

BEFORE AN OUTAGE

- Organize your freezer by grouping packages together so they will retain the cold more effectively.
- Keep meat and poultry items separated from other foods so if they begin to thaw, their juices will not contaminate other items.
- Obtain an appliance thermometer to keep in the freezer.
- If you have advanced notice of an outage lasting more than 4 hours, move foods that must be refrigerated into the freezer as space will allow.

DURING AN OUTAGE

- Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed.
- Do not place hot or room temperature food in the refrigerator once the power has gone out. It will raise the temperature inside the unit. Any foods that were prepared prior to the power outage that were not rapidly cooled should be discarded.
- Use block ice or bagged ice for supplemental cooling.

AFTER AN OUTAGE

- All potentially hazardous foods must be evaluated for proper temperatures. Bacteria can rapidly multiply on foods such as meat or poultry that have been at room temperature for more than two hours.
- If an appliance thermometer was kept in the freezer, check the temperature when the power comes back on. If thermometer reads 40 degrees or below, food is safe to refreeze or cook.
- Discard any perishable food in the refrigerator that has been above 40 degrees for 2 hours or more.