



refrigerator/freezer in blankets, making sure they don't touch the compressor, to create extra insulation. If it seems that the power will be off for more than 2 to 4 hours, re-pack refrigerated items into coolers with plenty of ice.

Items in the freezer potentially can stay frozen for 2 to 4 days, depending on the size of the freezer, how full it is, and how well insulated it is. A full freezer that had been operating at 0°F will keep foods frozen for about 48 hours if the door remains closed; a half-full one can only be expected to keep food frozen for a maximum of 24 hours. For extended power outages use blocks of dry ice in the freezer. A fifty pound block of dry ice will keep the contents of a full 18 cubic foot freezer frozen for 2 days.

Dry ice is very cold. Handle it carefully and always wear heavy gloves to prevent the ice from burning your hand. When you buy dry ice, have it cut into small enough sizes to use. Do not try to cut or chip it yourself. Ask the dry ice company to wrap each piece in newspaper for you. A 50 -pound block of dry ice is enough to protect frozen food in a full 20 -cubic freezer for three to four days. A 25 -pound block should hold the temperature of a half -full, 10 -cubic foot freezer for two to three days.

When the power does return, check the internal temperatures of all of your perishable foods with a calibrated food thermometer. Discard any perishable food that has been above 40°F for more than 2 hours as described above. Source of information: National Center for Home Food Preservation <http://www.uga.edu/nchfp>

My freezer is only partially full. Should I fill the space with something?

Answer: A full freezer turns on less and costs less to run. Fill the freezer with gallon jugs of water instead of leaving it partly full. In case of a power outage, the frozen jugs will keep the freezer cold longer and prevent food from thawing. When you need more space, just remove a jug. Reminder: Don't fill the jugs too full. Water expands as it freezes.