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PRESS RELEASE

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DHHS Provides Recommendations on Food Safety During Power Outages

Concord, NH – The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is releasing food safety recommendations for residents who have lost power in their homes as a result of last night's storm.

“Unexpected power outages can result in many difficulties,” stated DHHS Commissioner Nicholas Toumpas. “One big issue of concern is whether food is still safe to eat. To ensure the public's health and to avoid the potential of food-borne illnesses, we are advising people to take extra precautions when determining if their food should be saved or thrown away.”

“In this type of situation, you just can't be too careful,” said Public Health Director Dr. José Montero. “Even if food doesn't smell bad, and looks safe, it may have been out of a safe temperature range long enough to be contaminated with dangerous bacteria. A good rule to follow in this situation is, when in doubt throw it out.”

The US Department of Agriculture recommends taking the following steps during and after a weather emergency:

- Never taste food to determine if it is safe
- Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to maintain the cold temperature
- The refrigerator will keep food safely cold for about 4 hours if it is unopened. A full freezer will hold the temperature approximately 48 hours (24 hours if it is half full) and the door remains closed
- Food can be safely refrozen if it still contains ice crystals or is at 40°F or below
- Get block ice or dry ice to keep your refrigerator and freezer as cold as possible if the power is going to be out for an extended period of time
- Discard refrigerated perishable food such as meat, poultry, fish, soft cheeses, milk, eggs, leftovers, and deli items after 4 hours without power.