

When the Home Freezer Stops

When the freezer stops running, the power supply may be off or the freezer itself may be out of order. Don't worry if you know the freezer will be off only a few hours.

1. If the power is off, try to find out how long it will be off. Check plug and circuit breaker before proceeding.
2. Consult instruction book to determine if there is something you can do to put the freezer back into operation.
3. Find out how long it will take to get a technician to put the freezer back in running order.

If the home freezer stops running and will be off for some time, here are some things you can do to prevent food spoilage.

Keep the freezer closed

A closed freezer acts like an insulated ice chest. Food will usually stay frozen in a fully loaded cabinet for two days if the freezer is kept closed. A freezer that's partially full will not keep more than one day.

How long the food in your freezer will stay frozen depends on:

- The amount of food in the freezer.
- The kind of food. (A freezer full of meat or other dense foods will not warm up as fast as a freezer full of baked food.)
- The temperature of the food. (The colder the food, the longer it will stay frozen.)
- The freezer itself. (A well insulated freezer with good gaskets will keep food frozen much longer than one

with little insulation or poor gaskets.)

- Size of freezer. (The larger the freezer, the longer the food will stay frozen.)

Consider Moving the Food to a Locker Plant

Call the locker plant to see if it is operating and, if so, whether it has room for your food. If space is available, wrap the food in plenty of newspapers and blankets, or use insulated boxes. Rush the food to the locker plant.

Use Dry Ice

If locker space is not available and it looks as though the freezer will be out of service for more than a day, use dry ice if available. The more dry ice used, the longer the food will stay frozen.

Dry ice may be available from a local dairy or cold storage warehouse; or, check the yellow pages under "Dry Ice" or "Carbonic Gas." Have the dry ice company cut it into convenient sizes. Never touch dry ice with

Do Not Refreeze

- Food that has thawed completely--especially meat, poultry and seafood
- Prepared, cooked foods such as pizza, casseroles and stew
- Any food that has poor or questionable color or odor
- Thawed vegetables
- Creamed foods, puddings or other low-acid foods that have thawed
- Melted ice cream

your hands. Don't try to cut or chip the ice yourself. To prevent burns, wear gloves when handling dry ice. Do not inhale the vapors.

The temperature of a half-full, 10 cubic-foot cabinet can be kept below freezing for two to three days with about 25 pounds of dry ice. Food in a fully loaded cabinet will stay frozen from three to four days if the dry ice is added soon after the freezer shuts down.

Use 50 pounds of dry ice for a 20 cubic-foot freezer. Put heavy cardboard directly on the packages of frozen food, then put dry ice on the cardboard. Don't open the freezer again until you need to replace the dry ice or until the freezer is working again.

Cover the freezer with blankets or quilts to provide extra insulation. Be sure to pin or fasten the coverings so air-vent openings are not blocked. The power may go on unexpectedly and ventilation will be needed.

Safe To Refreeze

- Food that still contains ice crystals
- Thawed fruit if it still tastes and smells good
- Bread, cake, cookies, plain doughnuts
- Nuts, flour, cereal
- Raw meat and poultry that has thawed but is still cold (40° F or less) can be refrozen raw or cooked thoroughly and refrozen
- Juice
- Margarine
- Cheese

What To Do If Food Thaws

Generally, perishable foods held above 40 degrees for over 2 hours should be discarded because bacteria that cause food poisoning can multiply to unsafe levels under these conditions. Thawed food can be safely refrozen if it still contains ice crystals or if it has thawed, but is still cold (about 40° F) and has been kept at refrigerator temperature not more than one or two days.

Partial thawing and refreezing reduces the quality of foods, especially fruits and vegetables.

How to refreeze food

1. Clean freezer thoroughly before refilling. Wash all removable parts, gasket and door liner with warm water and mild detergent. Rinse well. Disinfect using a solution of 1 tablespoon chlorine bleach per quart of water. Rinse well.

2. Mark foods that are being refrozen.

3. Refreeze thawed food quickly. The best way is to take the food to a commercial locker plant so it can be chilled to 0° F or below. Wrap the food well with newspapers and blankets before moving it to or from the freezer plant.

If you must refreeze food at home. set the temperature control of the

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freezer to its coldest position. When the current comes on again, the freezer will run continuously and food will freeze quicker. Make sure cold air can circulate freely. After the food is frozen. return the temperature control to its usual setting.

4. Use refrozen food as soon as possible.

Handling Odor Problems

If food has thawed and spoiled in the freezer, a thorough cleaning job may not remove the strong, objectionable odor that lingers. Try one or more of the following methods:

- Wash the interior walls with a solution of 2 tablespoons baking soda per quart of water.
- Pour activated charcoal or baking soda onto jelly roll pans and place in freezer in two or more areas. Run freezer for several days. Activated charcoal can be purchased in quantity from stores that sell aquarium supplies. Small amounts are available from appliance stores.
- If the above methods do not take care of odor problems, it may be that wet drippings have seeped into the insulation. This problem requires service by a technician who may have to remove and replace the insulation.

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Be Prepared

U Locate the nearest locker plant. Discuss emergency arrangements with manager.

U Try to locate, ahead of time, a source of dry ice in your community.

U During the seasons when power failure is frequent in your community, it's good insurance to run the freezer between - 10° F and -20° F.

U When buying a freezer, select one with good insulation. A well insulated freezer will keep food cold longer than a poorly insulated one. Be sure to replace worn gaskets that might prevent a tight seal.

U Use care in preparing, packaging and freezing food. Sanitary preparation means fewer bacteria to cause spoilage. Frozen bacteria are not dead; when the temperature increases they become active and can cause spoilage and foodborne illness.

For additional help, contact your county extension office.

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