

Food when cooking is unavailable

ACTION CHECKLIST

Use safe ready-to-eat food, protect drinking water and keep hands and utensils clean. Do not run a camping stove, grill or charcoal indoors. Check food-storage times and temperatures after power loss; never taste suspect food to decide whether it is safe. Plan around dietary and medical needs.

[] Inventory safe food

Count shelf-stable items that can be eaten without heating and identify a manual opener. Separate suspect refrigerated food from safe supplies.

[] Plan small portions

Open only what can be eaten safely when refrigeration is unavailable. Read the label for storage after opening.

[] Protect water and hygiene

Use safe water for food and essential washing. Keep preparation surfaces separate from toilet waste and dirty containers.

[] Keep combustion outside

Use cooking equipment only in the location and manner its instructions allow. Never burn charcoal or use a camp stove inside a room, garage or enclosed balcony.

[] Include special needs

Plan for infants, allergies, diabetes, swallowing difficulty and pets. Do not change prescribed diets or infant formula preparation without qualified advice.

WATCH FOR

Food that looks and smells normal can still be unsafe. Do not salvage leaking, swollen or flood-contaminated packaging.

IF HELP IS UNAVAILABLE

Use known safe shelf-stable food already present and a written meal inventory. If no safe cooking position exists, choose food that does not need cooking rather than improvising an indoor flame.

Updated 2026-10-02 | Civilian educational guidance. Seek qualified help when reachable and safe; do not delay immediate protective action.

Full guide: <https://ospreyzero.com/guides/food-without-cooking/>

Food safety after power loss · official guidance