



# Hurricane Joe

## ***Eat, or Not To Eat, this is the Question ....***

So, you decide to get out of the way of a storm threatening your area. You packed up your family, your emergency kit and hit the road with a full tank of gas, just to be on the side of caution. A visit to some friends or a hotel, out of harms way, sounds like a very appropriate and safe thing to do at this time. A VERY SMART MOVE!

You track the storm and it passes just to the south of where you live. Feeling spared, you fill the car with gas and head on home. Upon arrival, to your delight, you see your home undamaged, just a yard full of debris to clean up. You enter your home and inspect it carefully to make sure it's safe. Your inspection also includes the freezer content to make sure everything is still frozen. All the food is rock solid, just as you left it and decide the food is safe. Or is it safe? Because you find the food is still frozen, does this mean the food is SAFE?

### **Absolutely NOT!**

Power loss in a storm affected area is very common and sometimes it may be off for days. Unbeknown to you while you were away, there might have been a power loss. So, for how long was the power off and was it long enough for your freezer to thaw?

**Don't be fooled** by a freezer that thaws out during a power loss and refreezes when the power is restored, giving you a false appearance that your food is safe.

Besides all of your annoying FLASHING digital clocks in your home telling you the power went out, there is a simple way of telling if your freezer had thawed.

Place a handful of ice cubes in a plastic bag. Place the bag, with the ice cubes, in a soup bowl and locate it in your freezer compartment before you depart.

Upon returning, after the storm passes, inspect the ice cubes you placed in the bag for their condition and shape.

If the ice cubes have held their form and still look like ice cubes, your freezer compartment has stayed cold enough to keep your food frozen and safe.

If you find a pool of frozen water inside the plastic bag, this is a sure way of knowing the temperature in your freezer compartment fell to an unsafe level, long enough to allow the ice cubes and your food to thaw and then refreeze when the power was restored.

Don't take the chance with food that has not been properly maintained, it can make you very ill. **Throw away** all perishables and items requiring refrigeration, in both sides of your refrigerator and start fresh. This also applies to a separate, stand alone freezer, if you have one.

Stay Safe and Stay Healthy,

***Hurricane Joe***

Additional information on *Food Safety in a Power Outage*, see;

From: ***The American Red Cross***

[http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/0.1082.0\\_564\\_.00.html](http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/0.1082.0_564_.00.html)

From: ***The USDA***

[http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact\\_Sheets/Keeping\\_Food\\_Safe\\_During\\_an\\_Emergency/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Keeping_Food_Safe_During_an_Emergency/index.asp)