



STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA  
**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES**  
**BUREAU FOR PUBLIC HEALTH**

**Commissioner's Office**

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**IMPORTANT JANUARY 2016 WINTER STORM JONAS INFORMATION**

**TO: Local Health Departments**  
**FROM: Rahul Gupta, MD, MPH, FACP**  
**Commissioner and State Health Officer**  
**DATE: January 22, 2016**  
**RE: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Public Health is informing all local health departments (LHDs) of the impending Winter Storm Jonas and the potential for significant snowfall, sleet or freezing rain and power outages.

**Ensuring food safety following a winter storm prevents illness.**

It is important for residents who lose electrical power and are without a back-up generator to dispose of any perishable food items that have been stored at temperatures greater than 41 degrees Fahrenheit for longer than 4 hours to help eliminate the possibility of food contamination. Foodborne illness can be serious and poses significant health risks. In addition to individuals and families, supermarkets, convenience stores and restaurant owners need to be cautious. When in doubt, throw it out.

Use the following tips to help ensure your food is safe while waiting for electricity to be restored:

1. Destroy all perishable foods requiring refrigeration if their temperature has been above 41 degrees Fahrenheit for more than 4 hours.
2. Frozen foods in a closed freezer should remain frozen up to 24 hours after losing electrical power. After 24 hours, if the food is still partially frozen, it should be safe to refreeze.
3. Destroy all frozen foods that have thawed and have been stored at temperatures above the 41 degrees Fahrenheit danger zone for more than 4 hours.

Residents may contact the LHD or Bureau for Public Health with their questions.