



MEDIA ADVISORY
from the Franklin County
Emergency Operations Center

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 16, 2008 WIND STORM UPDATE

CONTACT:

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614-794-0213

Dial 9-1-1 for emergencies ONLY.

EOC

- EOC staff working with all cities, townships and villages to access the status of recovery and determine any needs.
- The EOC is actively engaged in planning and coordination to stand up shelters, social services, transportation, public information, and volunteers, as needed.

Power Outage and Food Safety

- Dispose of perishable food in trash receptacles.
- Food items kept in a closed refrigerator are safe to consume for up to four to eight hours after power is lost. Perishable food should be stored at 41 degrees or below.
- Items kept in a closed freezer will only be safe to eat for 24 hours.

- Previously cooked foods (leftovers) not refrigerated below 41 degrees for greater than four hours should be considered spoiled or unsafe and should be thrown away.
- **When in doubt, throw it out!**
- The Franklin County Board of Health and Columbus Public Health are visiting restaurants and food establishments without power to assure proper food handling. At this point, for those who still do not have power, you should presume that refrigerated/frozen food is no longer safe for consumption unless measures such as using dry ice or portable generators have been used to maintain proper temperatures and the safety of the food has been verified by using a stem thermometer.
- If any food operators have specific questions, they should contact the health department that issued their license.

Down Power Lines

- Down power lines should be treated as live or energized. Power lines may be de-energized at one time and then re-energized when AEP is trying to restore power.
- If you see yellow, orange or red scene tape, the fire department has already responded. Please do not call 911 again.

Food Stamps – Franklin County Job and Family Services

- If individuals have lost their food due to the power outage, Food Stamp regulations permit the replacement of food stamps if the situation meets the definition of misfortune or disaster.
- Individuals who receive food stamps and who have lost food due to the power outage may go to their home opportunity center for reimbursement.

Mental Health

- Contact your local mental health agency if you or a family member is experiencing an increase in mental stress related to the power outage.

Shelter

- The American Red Cross emergency shelter at the Rhodes Center on the Ohio State Fairgrounds (717 E. 17th Avenue, Columbus, OH 43211) remains open and available to those in need of food or a place to stay overnight.
- Those who are accustomed to taking care of themselves and their loved ones with the aid of medical devices at home may continue to do so at the shelter.
- Anyone needing assistance with transportation to the shelter should call COTA at 228-1776.

211

- FIRSTLINK's 2-1-1 Information and Referral service is accepting priority emergency calls for referrals to services providing food, shelter and other basic needs until 8 p.m. this evening. Information referral specialists will be available again at 8 a.m. tomorrow morning by calling 2-1-1.
- In addition to emergency referrals, FIRSTLINK is also accepting information from those wishing to volunteer with debris removal and other post-storm needs. Those wishing to volunteer to assist with debris removal or other needs should call 2-1-1.

Traffic Signals

- Police say intersections without power should be used by motorists as four-way stops until power is restored. Use courtesy and caution when traveling through an intersection.

HELPFUL LINKS:

Franklin County Emergency Management Agency & Homeland Security
www.franklincountyohio.gov/emahs

Franklin County Board of Commissioners
www.franklincountyohio.gov/commissioners

City of Columbus
www.columbus.gov

American Electric Power
www.aepohio.com

Red Cross of Greater Columbus
<http://columbus.redcross.org>

Columbus Public Health
<http://publichealth.columbus.gov>

Franklin County Board of Health
www.co.franklin.oh.us/board_of_health

NOTE TO EDITOR:

For additional information contact the Joint Information Center at the Franklin County EMA by calling (614)794-0213.