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For Immediate Release

SUBJECT: Food & Water Safety during Power Outages
Contact: Rose Ann Davis, Health Department, 995-6104

In light of recent storms and the local emergency declaration in Grand Traverse County, the Health Department would like to remind individuals, businesses and any restaurants who are still without power, to be aware of possible health concerns.

Water Safety: During a power outage, the water supplied to you may no longer be safe to drink without treatment. Pumps and water purification systems may not operate properly, including those used with private wells. To ensure safety, you can use one of the following steps to treat tap water:

1. Bring water to a full boil for at least one minute.
2. If water cannot be boiled, add eight drops (1/8 teaspoons) of bleach to each gallon of water. Stir well and let the water stand for at least 90 minutes before using. Let water stand overnight if using to mix baby formula.
3. Buy water purification tablets to treat water or purchase purified drinking water direct from local retailers.
4. For more information on disinfection of wells,
http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/emergency/safe_water/wells/disinfection_wells_drilled.html

Food Safety: The key factors to consider for with food during a power outage is time and temperature. Foodborne illnesses can be caused by bacteria that multiply rapidly in food over 41° F. If the power is out for longer than two hours, the following guidelines can help to keep your food safe:

1. Use a digital or dial thermometer to help you know if food has been kept at a safe temperature.
2. A full freezer will hold food safely for up to 48 hours (24 hours if only half full). Do not open the freezer door to maintain colder temperatures. You can safely refreeze foods if their temperature remains less than 41°F.
3. The refrigerator will keep food safely for up to 4 hours. If power is out longer than this, make sure to discard milk, dairy products, meats, fish, poultry, eggs, leftovers and any food exposed to temperature over 41°F.

Further information on food or water safety can be found at
<http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/poweroutage/needtoknow.asp>

Additionally, if you are involved with debris removal after the storm, be sure to take proper physical safety precautions such as closed toe boots and gloves, as well as making sure you are current on your tetanus immunization.

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