Is your kitchen ready for a Hurricane?

Steps to follow to prepare for a possible weather emergency:

- Keep an appliance thermometer in the refrigerator and freezer. An appliance thermometer will indicate the temperature inside the refrigerator and freezer in case of a power outage.
- Make sure the freezer is at 0°F or below and the refrigerator is at 40°F or below.
- Freeze containers of water for ice to help keep food cold in the freezer, refrigerator or coolers after the power is out.
- Freeze refrigerated items such as leftovers, milk and fresh meat and poultry that you may not need immediately.
- Plan ahead and know where dry ice and block ice can be purchased.
- Have coolers on hand to keep refrigerator food cold if the power will be out for more than 4 hours. Purchase or make ice cubes and store in the freezer for use in the refrigerator or in a cooler.
- Group food together in the freezer - this helps the food stay cold longer.
- Store food on shelves that will be safely out of the way of contaminated water in case of flooding.

Steps to follow after the weather emergency:

- Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to maintain the cold temperature.
- The refrigerator will keep food safely cold for about 4 hours if it is opened. A full freezer will hold the temperature for approximately 48 hours (24 hours if it is half full) and the door remains closed.
- Discard refrigerated perishable food such as meat, poultry, fish, soft cheeses, milk, eggs, leftovers and deli items after 4 hours without power.
- Food may be safely refrozen if it still contains ice crystals or is at 40°F or below when checked with a food thermometer.
- Never taste a food to determine its safety!
- Obtain dry or block ice to keep your refrigerator and freezer as cold as possible if the power is going to be out for a prolonged period of time. Fifty pounds of dry ice should hold an 18-cubic-foot full freezer for 2 days.
- If the power has been out for several days, check the temperature of the freezer with an appliance thermometer. If the appliance thermometer reads 40°F or below, the food is safe to refreeze.
- Discard any food that is not in a waterproof container if there is any chance that it has come into contact with flood water.