Power Outage/Food Loss: Replacement SNAP Benefits

Know Your Rights

In Massachusetts

For more help contact your local legal services program or visit: .masslegalhelp.org

Perishable food can begin to spoil after just 4 hours without power. If you lose power and your food spoils, you may be able to get Replacement SNAP benefits to replace food that spoiled.

SNAP rules provide for replacement of food lost by SNAP recipients due to "*household misfortune*." You can get funds to replace the food you purchased with your SNAP benefits. A federal or state disaster declaration is not required.

Household misfortune includes losing food from your home if:

- a local or neighborhood power outage lasts 4 hours or more,
- your utilities are shut off (for any reason),
- your freezer or refrigerator stops working, or
- a fire, flood, or storm causes damage.

Household misfortune can also include lost food due to loss of power to many homes in your city or county caused by severe weather or a widespread power failure.

How do I apply for replacement SNAP?

Within 10 days of the incident or end of the outage, contact your DTA case manager to report the loss of food. You can do this in person, by phone, fax, or mail.

Within 10 days of reporting the loss, you also need to give DTA a signed "Statement of Loss" describing what happened and the dollar value of the food you lost. This can also serve as your initial report. Bottom line: the sooner you get DTA this form, the faster the SNAP replacement benefits. (A copy of the DTA Statement of Loss form is on the back of this flier).

What happens next?

DTA will verify the power outage or fire through news media sources, fire department reports or the Red Cross. If you have suffered a utility shut off or appliance failure, DTA may ask you for proofs. You do not need to show them the spoiled food! If you are eligible, DTA can replace the value of the food lost up to one month's SNAP benefit, depending on how much food you lost.

Other ways SNAP can help persons recover in emergencies:

→ If a wide spread natural disaster affects many people in your community, the federal government allows households not already receiving SNAP to get Disaster SNAP (D-SNAP). This is an emergency food SNAP replacement benefit with higher income eligibility rules.

→ If you are have little or no income or cash in the bank and are not already receiving SNAP, you may be eligible to get expedited (fast) SNAP benefits. Expedited SNAP benefits are provided within 7 days. Otherwise, it can take up to 30 days to qualify.

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Attachment A

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Department of Transitional Assistance

Statement of Loss/Request for Replacement Food Due to a Household Disaster or Misfortune

I, _____, of _____
(Name) (Street)

_____, Massachusetts
(City/ZIP

EBT Card # _____certify that I am in need of replacement food because

food I had purchased with my Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, in the amount of $_____, was destroyed in a household disaster/misfortune.

The household disaster/misfortune that occurred on _____was: (Explain)
(Date)

_____

_____

I certify under penalty of perjury that the information I have given in this statement is correct and true.

I understand that if I intentionally made a false or misleading statement about the destruction of my food purchased with SNAP benefits, or misrepresent, conceal, or withhold any facts, I may be prosecuted for an Intentional Program Violation. Prosecution for an Intentional Program Violation may result in my ineligibility to participate in SNAP for a period of 12 months for the first violation, 24 months for the second violation, and permanently for the third violation.

_____ _____
Head of Household Signature Date

_____ _____
Witness Signature Date

The occurrence of the household disaster/misfortune outlined above was confirmed by:

☐ Home Visit on _____
Date

☐ Collateral Contact with _____on _____
Name Date

☐ Documentation from _____on _____
Community Agency Date

_____ _____
Case Manager Date

Original to Case Record – Copy to Client