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Are frozen canned foods still safe to eat?

K-State food scientist says broken or unsealed cans should be discarded

K-State Research and Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kan. — With recent cold weather and power outages come many challenges, including food safety. Kansas State University food scientist Karen Blakeslee said frozen canned or jarred foods can be a safety hazard.

“If you have canned foods, either home canned or commercially canned, in a storage location that froze, first check for broken seals or seams in metal cans or broken glass jars in both commercial or home canned foods due to expansion of the food and liquid inside the container,” Blakeslee said.

If all preservation containers are intact, they can be saved.

“Thaw (the canned food) gradually and store it at room temperature,” Blakeslee said.

She recommends discarding commercially canned foods with broken seams or canned foods with broken glass, as they can lead to contamination. This includes home canned foods that came unsealed and thawed.

“If a glass jar became unsealed but is still frozen, this can be safely used immediately or transferred to a new container and stored in the refrigerator or freezer,” Blakeslee said.

To prevent a future food crisis during cold weather, Blakeslee suggests moving containers to a warmer location or wrapping jars or cans in paper and cover with blankets to insulate them.

“Another option for vulnerable storage locations is to prop open the pantry or cupboard doors to allow warm air inside,” Blakeslee said.

Blakeslee, who also is coordinator of [K-State’s Rapid Response Center for Food Science](#), publishes a monthly newsletter called [You Asked It!](#) that provides numerous tips on food safety.

More information is also available from [local extension offices](#) in Kansas.

FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS: Links used in this story
Rapid Response Center, <https://www.rrc.k-state.edu>

You Asked It! newsletter, <https://www.rrc.k-state.edu/newsletter>

K-State Research and Extension local offices, <https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/about/statewide-locations.html>

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