Using Dry Ice During a Power Failure

If it seems likely that your freezer will not be operating properly within one or two days, dry ice may help keep some frozen food from spoiling. However, dry ice is very expensive and is not easy to obtain in some areas. If a flood is predicted, and you decide to use dry ice, locate a source in advance, and obtain it quickly.

Your power company may be able to direct you to a source of dry ice.

1. Wear gloves when handling dry ice. Do not touch it with your bare hands, because it causes severe frostbite and tissue damage.
2. Allow 2 ½ to 3 pounds of ice per cubic foot of freezer space. (More will be needed for an upright freezer because ice should be placed on each shelf.)
3. Place heavy cardboard on top of packages as a protective layer between the dry ice and the frozen food. In an upright freezer place ice on each shelf.
4. Cover the freezer with blankets, but do not lock it or cover air vent openings. *Gas (carbon dioxide) given off by the dry ice needs a place to escape.* Open basement or room windows or doors to vent out the gas from dry ice. (Also, never transport large quantities of dry ice in an enclosed vehicle due to the risk of carbon dioxide buildup.)
5. Before going out and purchasing a large quality of dry ice, stop to consider the cost/benefits. In some locations where supplies of dry ice are limited, the cost of the ice will be greater than the cost of the food you are trying to protect. You might also check with your insurance agent to determine if the cost of the dry ice, or the contents of the freezer are covered by your homeowner’s policy.