Safety of Refrigerated Foods during Evacuation

1. Most chopped meats, poultry and seafood sandwich fillings should not be left without refrigeration for more than four hours. If you have to leave your home without an ice chest containing ice, take only cold ingredients that can be consumed immediately when you arrive at the shelter where you are staying during the emergency.
2. You can extend your food supply by cooking unthawed meat immediately over alternative heat sources such as gas or charcoal grills. Large, solid, unboned pieces of fresh beef or lamb such as rump roast, or leg of lamb are least susceptible to quick spoilage.
3. *Uncured meats and sausage* are vulnerable to contamination because it is free of preservatives. Keep it frozen until you "must" leave, and *then cook before it is completely thawed*.
4. *Raw chopped meats*, like hamburger, spoil quickly. Pork, fish, and poultry spoil quickly. Dispose of them if they have been without refrigeration for four hours or more. Do not trust your sense of smell.
5. *Eggs* can be kept several weeks in a cool place without refrigeration, depending on their freshness. Hard-cooked eggs are safe for 5 days but no longer than 7 days at room temperature.
6. *Hard cheese* usually keeps well for short periods at room temperatures. Other cheeses, such as cream cheese, opened containers of cheese spreads, and cottage cheese spoil quickly and should be consumed immediately or discarded. If surface mold develops on blocks of cheese, slice 1/2 inch below the surface and discard.
7. *Milk* spoils quickly without refrigeration. Throw out spoiled milk. Sour milk may be used in baking.
8. *Custards, gravies*, creamed foods, chopped meat, poultry and seafood sandwich fillings spoil quickly when unrefrigerated and provide ideal growing places for organisms causing food poisoning. Dispose of these foods if they have warmed to room temperatures. Spoilage is difficult to detect since there may be no offensive odor or taste.
9. *Commercially-made baked goods with cream filling* are not safe to take when evacuating unless you have a cold place to keep them. It is best to leave cream pies and all foods containing high protein and moisture behind unless you store them in a cooler with ice during evacuation.