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Alaska SNAP Recipients Granted Temporary Hot Foods Waiver Following Western Alaska Storm Damage

December 2, 2025, ANCHORAGE – The Alaska Department of Health’s Division of Public Assistance (DPA) has received federal approval for a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) “hot foods waiver” in response to the severe storm that struck Western Alaska. Although the waiver was approved due to the disaster, all SNAP recipients statewide may use it.

SNAP clients can temporarily use their Alaska Quest Card to purchase hot, fully prepared, ready-to-eat foods at SNAP-authorized grocery and convenience stores statewide. Examples of eligible items include hot deli meals, pre-made sandwiches, rotisserie chicken, pizza, breakfast sandwiches, hot soup, and other foods meant to be eaten immediately. The waiver may be extended if needed.

“The approval of this waiver gives families across Alaska more options during this challenging time,” said Deb Etheridge, Director of the Division of Public Assistance at the Alaska Department of Health. “We remain committed to supporting communities as they recover by ensuring they have access to essential food resources.”

All other SNAP rules remain unchanged. This waiver does not allow the purchase of alcohol, tobacco, vitamin supplements, toiletries, pet food, or non-food items. SNAP recipients can continue buying all regular cold groceries as usual.

The storm caused widespread flooding, power outages, and damage to homes and community infrastructure in Western Alaska, leaving many residents unable to safely store or prepare food. While recovery work continues, the hot foods waiver gives families more flexibility to meet their nutritional needs.

Information for SNAP Clients

- Your SNAP eligibility and benefit amount do not change.
- You may use SNAP to buy hot or ready-to-eat food at participating SNAP-authorized stores during the waiver period.

- Examples include: rotisserie chicken, hot soup, deli meals, pizza, pre-made sandwiches, and breakfast sandwiches.
- You may still purchase all regular cold groceries with SNAP.
- The waiver is statewide until Dec. 20, 2025 (unless extended).
- This temporary change supports families who may not be able to safely cook or store food due to the recent disaster.

Information for Retailers

- During the waiver period, eligible hot deli and prepared foods may be processed as SNAP-eligible; the EBT system will permit these items.
- The waiver does not authorize restaurant or fast-food purchases (Alaska does not operate a Restaurant Meals Program).
- Stores may not advertise “EBT-only” specials on hot foods unless separately approved under a USDA incentive waiver.
- The waiver is statewide until Dec. 20, 2025 (unless extended).

DPA continues to work closely with federal partners, Tribal organizations, and local governments to support community recovery, restore services, and ensure Alaskans have access to critical resources. More information on SNAP benefits and disaster supports is available at health.alaska.gov/dpa and a printable flyer for retailers to print and display can be [found here](#).

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