

Guideline on Emergency Action Plans for Food Establishments

In the event of an imminent health hazard involving interruption of electrical service, water service, contaminated water supply, fire, flood or sewage back up at a food service establishment the following actions should be taken:

- **Assess the situation.** Immediately discontinue operation if a safe operation cannot be maintained.
- **Notify the Public Health Inspector** of the imminent health hazard and discuss alternate procedures to be used. Determine if the issue is widespread.

Follow the Appropriate Emergency Procedures if approved by the Public Health Inspector or remain closed until granted approval to re-open by the regulatory authority. A food establishment that was ordered or otherwise required to cease operations may not re-open until authorization has been granted by the regulatory authority.

Manitoba Health's Health Protection Unit will promptly respond to single events involving imminent health hazards and provide guidance to help the operator resume operation as quickly as possible.

Emergency Action Plans

Interruption of Electrical Service

It is recommended that the operator of an establishment note the date and time of the electrical service interruption and notify the regulatory authority at the onset of the interruption. After two hours the operator must close the establishment.

Response:

The following are temporary alternative procedures that should be taken to address specific affected food operations during an extended interruption of electrical service.

Affected Operations:

In response to an electrical service interruption affected operations are to monitor:

- Refrigeration- Note the time the power outage begins; monitor and record food temperatures every two hours. Keep the refrigeration doors closed to help maintain the temperature. Pack potentially hazardous food in commercially made ice. Do not put hot food in the refrigeration equipment.
- Ventilation- No mechanical ventilation provided to remove cooking smoke; steam, grease laden air, etc therefore discontinue all cooking operations.
- Lighting-Lack of artificial illumination for personal safety, food preparation, food handling, cleaning equipment/utensils, cleaning the premises.
- Cooking Equipment- Discard potentially hazardous foods that were in the cooking or re-heating process since cooking equipment is no longer functional.
- Hot Food Holding - Equipment for holding potentially hazardous food hot is no longer operational. Note the time the power outage begins and discard all potentially hazardous food four hours after removing it from temperature control (below 60⁰C).

- Dishwashing Equipment- Equipment for cleaning and sanitizing utensils and tableware is not longer operational. Use the three compartment sink method to manually wash dishes, if hot water is still available. The use of single service tableware can also be used and discontinue operations that generate soiled utensils/tableware.
- Water- See “Interruption of Water Service”
- Sewage Disposal- if the use of restroom facilities is not possible; the operation should be closed.

Should the disposal of food be required, all food discarded should be denatured (such as with bleach or other cleaning product to render it unusable) and placed in an outside refuse bin for removal. If large volumes require disposal a disposal company to be contacted for transportation to a licensed landfill. A warning label should be placed on all denatured food packaging to alert potential scavengers that the food is poisonous.

Recovery:

Recovery involves the necessary steps for re-opening and returning to a normal safe operation.

A food establishment that was ordered or required to cease operations may not re-open until authorization has been granted by the regulatory authority.

Refrigeration Food Safety Guide: Cold Food Temperature Guide

Time	5-7 ⁰ C	8-10 ⁰ C	10 ⁰ C or above
0-2 hours	PHF can be sold	Immediately cool PHF to 5 ⁰ C or below within 2 hours	PHF cannot be sold; destroy the food
2-3 hours	PHF can be sold, but must be cooled to 5 ⁰ C or below within 2 hours	Immediately cool PHF to 5 ⁰ C or below within 1 hour	
4 hours	Immediately cool PHF to 5 ⁰ C or below within 1 hour	PHF cannot be sold; destroy the food	
5+ hours	PHF cannot be sold; destroy the food		

Interruption of Water Service

It is recommended that the operator of an establishment note the date and time of the water service interruption and notify the regulatory agency at the onset of the interruption. After two hours the operator must close the establishment.

Response:

The following temporary alternative procedures can be taken to address specific affected food operations during an interruption of water service.

Affected Operations:

- Hand washing: No water to wash hands. An alcohol based hand sanitizer may be used for cleaning hands if the food items offered are prepackaged or protected from contamination by hands, no bare hand contact with food will occur, AND a hand washing facility is available in the restroom. Potable water from an approved public water supply can be placed in a clean, sanitized container with a spigot, which can be used for hand washing. Suitable hand soap, disposable towels and a waste receptacle must also be provided.
- Toilet Facilities: No water to flush toilets. Discontinue operation if toilet facilities are not available.
- Drinking Water: Use commercially bottled water; Haul water from an approved public water supply in a covered sanitized container.
- Cooking: For food preparation use commercially bottled water; Haul water from an approved public water supply in a covered sanitized container.
- Ice: Use commercially manufactured ice.
- Post Mix Fountain Drinks: Discontinue service
- Cleaning & Sanitizing: Use single service articles; Use commercially bottled water or water from approved water supply for manually dishwashing. Discontinue operations when inventories of clean equipment and tableware are exhausted. Discontinue operations when cleanliness of the physical facility jeopardizes food safety.

Recovery:

Recovery involves the necessary steps for re-opening and returning to a normal safe operation.

Once water is restored flush out all pipes/faucets as per municipality directions; Equipment with water line connections i.e. Coffee makers, ice machines, glass washers, dishwashers, etc, must be flushed, cleaned, and sanitized in accordance with manufacturers' instructions. Flush hot water tank, ice machine, beverage machines, and drinking fountains continuously for 5 minutes.

Contaminated Water Supply

An imminent health hazard exists whenever a municipality has issued a boil water advisory or when an onsite water supply has exceeded the maximum contaminant level for coliform bacteria.

Response:

The following are temporary alternative procedures to address specific affected food operations during a biological contamination of the water supply (boil water advisory). Where "boiled" water is indicated, the water must remain at a rolling boil for at least one minute. Although chemicals such as bleach are sometimes used for disinfecting small amounts of household drinking water, chemical disinfection is generally not an option for food establishments because of the lack of onsite equipment for testing chemical residuals.

Affected Operations:

- Drinking water/Cooking- use commercially bottled water, water that has been boiled for at least one minute or haul water from approved public supply in a covered sanitized container.
- Beverages made with water- including post mix carbonated beverages, coffee makers, hot water dispenser, etc. Use alternative procedures; discontinue use of such equipment.
- Ice Making- discard existing ice and discontinue making ice. Use commercially manufactured ice.
- Preparing food products requiring water- discard any ready to eat food prepared with water prior to the discovery of the contamination. Prepare all food using commercially bottled or boiled water.
- Washing Produce- use pre-washed packaged produce and/or use frozen/canned fruits and vegetables and/or wash fresh produce with boiled, commercially bottled water or safe potable water.

- Thawing of Frozen Foods- thaw only in the refrigerator or as part of cooking process.
- Hand washing- use heated bottled water, boiled water or potable water from an approved public water supply; use tap water followed by a hand sanitizer and suspend alternate procedures for bare hand contact. Do not allow bare hand contact with ready-to-eat food.
- Cleaning and Sanitizing Utensils and Tableware: Use single service articles or use existing mechanical dishwasher or three compartment sink method. Ensure the sanitization step is being properly conducted (sanitizer concentration/temperature).
- Spray Misting Units (used for produce, meat, etc.)- discontinue use of misters.

Recovery:

After the municipality or regulatory authority has provided notice that the water supply is safe to use, the operator must verify that all the equipment is safe to use and properly flushed as per recovery steps in the interruption of water service.

Food Safety after a Fire

Response:

The following are temporary alternative procedures that can be taken to address specific affected food operations as a result of a fire.

- A non-reportable fire is any small confined fire in a food establishment that has been extinguished using a simple device such as a wet towel or pan lid. Otherwise, all other fires must be reported to the regulatory authority.
- Fire is confined to a small incidental area or a single piece of equipment and fire is extinguished using a simple fire-fighting device (i.e. hand held extinguisher) that does not require extensive cleanup. Unaffected areas of the establishment may remain open while cleanup and minor repairs are done.

- If the process of fighting the fire (regardless of size) contaminates any of the following: foods, equipment, utensils, linens, single service items, etc discontinue operations immediately. Typically, these fires are associated with the use of high pressure fire suppression devices (i.e. ventilation hood fire suppression system or professional fire department equipment). Resume operations only after recovery steps have been completed.
- Discontinue operations if a fire causes extensive damage to equipment and the facility's structure. Resume operations only after recovery steps have been completed.

Recovery:

Recovery involves the following necessary steps for re-opening and returning to a normal safe operation.

The owner/operator will:

- Contact all other appropriate agencies to determine if the building structure is safe and approved for occupancy.
- Sort the salvageable from the non-salvageable foods as quickly as possible.
- Properly dispose of the non-salvageable food items.
- Provide general clean-up. Clean and sanitize equipment and utensils.

Food salvaging/General Considerations:

If the quantities of food involved are large (i.e. supermarket or large warehouse) it may be feasible to attempt salvage for either human or animal consumption.

- Smoke Damage: This will depend on the type of fire, proximity to the fire and the contents or stock contained in the premises. If the smoke is extensive or even just of a minor nature, practically all open goods should be removed for destruction. Depending on the extent of the smoke encountered in a premises, certain boxed or packaged goods have to be checked for smoke contamination especially where cartons show smoke residue on the exterior. In all cases where only smoke is involved canned goods are found to be safe for consumption after cleaning the exterior, even where the exterior and labels are badly discolored from smoke. The contents of refrigerators generally are not affected by smoke unless excessive smoke has occurred and penetrated around doors or other openings.

- Water Damage: Stocks may suffer extensive damage from water, and condemnation of all foodstuffs excepting those in sealed containers is recommended. Canned goods may require washing and sanitizing. In premises where a fire has occurred, basement stock rooms may be flooded due to sewers being incapable of carrying off the quantity of water used in fighting the fire. In such cases foodstuffs should be dealt with in the same manner in which flood damaged foods are handled.
- Heat Damage: Any foodstuffs which show signs of having been burnt must be immediately destroyed. Meat and meat products showing signs of having been scorched or partially cooked are to be disposed. In the case of refrigerators containing meat and meat products, if the seals around the doors have not been broken or damaged by heat and the power is still on, the contents will generally be found to be satisfactory for immediate consumption. Canned goods exposed to excessive heat generally show signs of blowing. If only slightly affected by heat such cans should be held for approximately three weeks and checked at that time for signs of blowing or leaks; if present such cans should be destroyed. Glass food containers which are involved in heat damage should be closely checked for cracks or other damage and if any sign of damage is evident they should be condemned. Other items such as cereals, grains, coffee, tea etc, are not generally affected by heat unless when in direct contact they will take on a burnt taste and therefore should not be used for human consumption. Fruits and vegetables which are subjected to heat of any great degree should be condemned.

The following is a guideline on how to handle specific food items:

- **Bottled soft drinks**: Unless protected by plastic outer wrap or in bottles with a sealed screw on lid, soft drinks in glass bottles are almost impossible to salvage. In addition, soft drinks in plastic bottles are almost always deemed unsalvageable due to heat and smoke.
- **Canned soft drinks**: They may be salvaged if the contents have not been subjected to excessive heat or fire. The cans must be cleaned and sanitized, if necessary. If the cans have been subjected to excessive heat or are deemed uncleanable, the contents must be destroyed.
- **Dairy products**: As a rule, dairy products must be destroyed with no attempt to salvage, due to vulnerable packaging and temperature requirements.
- **Sugars, candies, flour, cereal products, bakery products, beans, rice and grains**: Usually, no attempt to salvage such products can be permitted due to vulnerable packaging.

- **Products in glass with metal screw-type or metal slip covers:** This includes pickles and like items, ketchup, sauces in bottles, salad dressings, syrups, etc. This type of container is impossible to clean or disinfect due to exposure of the threaded closure and must be destroyed.
- **Fish and meats- fresh or frozen:** In almost all instances, these products must be destroyed.
- **Refrigerated and frozen foods:** Usually no salvage can be attempted unless frozen foods are stored in a completely enclosed walk-in cooler or cabinet freezer that has a seal and electrical service has not been interrupted for extended periods. Prompt removal of such foods to a suitable storage unit is necessary to save the product.
- **Produce- fresh or dried:** Usually, no attempt to salvage can be permitted and all such products must be destroyed.
- **Canned goods:** Where the heat and water damage has been minimal, canned goods can be salvaged quickly by cleaning the exterior surfaces and removing them to a suitable storage area, preferably away from the fire scene. Cleaning and re-labeling a relatively small quantity of canned goods is usually not attempted because of the cost involved compared to the lower value of the salvaged product.
- **Single service items:** The operator/regulator must consider soot residue, even on single service items that are still in plastic sleeves, due to the static electricity and transfer. Some operators/regulators may think that the sleeves can be “wiped” off and because the items were wrapped, they should be okay for service, when, in reality, they may not be okay.

General Cleanup Considerations:

- All areas affected by the fire must be cleaned and sanitized.
- All damaged food products, equipment, utensils, linens, and single service/use items must be removed from the premises as necessary.
- Re-occupancy should only be allowed after the fire department has determined that the structure is safe.
- If an insurance company is involved it is recommended they be notified as soon as possible.

Disposal of Food:

If it is determined that food must be discarded:

- Remove to a designated condemned food storage area away from food preparation and equipment storage. Secured in covered refuse containers or other isolated areas to prevent either service to the public, or accidental contamination of the facility and other food.
- If the food must be retained until the distributor can credit the facility, it must be clearly labeled as “NOT FOR SALE.”
- Discarded refrigerated food may be stored in a refrigerated location separate from other food and held for credit until recorded by food supplier/distributor.
- The facility should document the type and amount of food, costs and the reason for disposal for insurance and regulatory purposes.
- If the health department recommends disposal, the products and amounts should be documented.
- Small volumes of food to be discarded can be denatured with a cleaning product (such as bleach) and placed in a covered refuse bin outside the facility.
- Large volumes of food should be stored in covered refuse containers in a secure location and disposed of by a refuse disposal company as soon as possible.

If business is closed for renovation or repairs the plans may need to be reviewed by the Public Health Inspector and a reopening inspection conducted by the regulating authority.

Response to a Flood

Flood damage includes floods from rivers flooding over banks into the neighboring premises; flooding due to a break in the water main; the backing up of a sewer which may be due to heavy rains; or from the sewers being incapable of handling the amount of water used in fighting a fire.

Response:

Flood waters can create potential health hazards. The following are temporary alternative procedures that can be taken to address food establishments after

being affected by a flood. The operation may be affected by a minor leakage or a flood throughout the entire building.

- Minor Leakage from a water line or incidental water accumulation on a floor. Food, utensils, equipment, etc are not affected. Unaffected areas of the establishment may remain open while recovery in the affected areas
- Flooding inside the building due to overflow of a body of water, poor surface drainage, a major break in a water line, etc. will result in discontinuing the operation.

Recovery:

- Thoroughly wash cleanable surfaces with a solution of water and detergent.
- Sort the salvageable from non-salvageable foods, equipment, utensils, linens, and single service items as quickly as possible.
- Remove and discard non-cleanables.
- Ensure the building is safe. Contact local building department to determine if the building structure is safe. Check for downed power lines and gas smells.
- Ensure personal protection equipment is worn during cleanup. The clean up must include the following:
 - All damaged food equipment, utensils; single service items must be destroyed and properly disposed.
 - Floors, walls, furnishings, carpets, utensils, and equipment damaged beyond salvage must be removed and replaced as necessary.
 - Affected walls, floors and equipment surfaces must be cleaned with soap and water, rinsed and sanitized. Carpets should be removed or steam cleaned.
 - Remove wet materials. Dispose of any materials that cannot be effectively cleaned and sanitized.
 - Remove any standing water.
 - Clean and sanitize any utensils and equipment.
 - Use a detergent solution to clean floors, equipment and other affected areas followed by a clean water rinse.
 - Sanitize the floor using a concentration of 500 ppm of chlorine solution.

- Launder or discard mop heads and other cleaning aids that came in contact with the flood water. As well as, linens or uniforms that came in contact with the flood water.
- Discard any food items (packaged or unpackaged) in contact with flood water.

General Flood Water Assessment

Flood waters may carry raw sewage, chemical waste, or other contaminants that may cause food even if packaged to be unsafe to consume. Therefore, discard any food or food packaging materials that came in contact with flood water. Very few food or beverage items can be salvaged after being exposed to flood water. Food items in soft packaging or with screw top lids must be destroyed.

Flood water can make food unsafe to consume, therefore discard any food items if water has covered, splashed, dripped or seeped into the package. The following items should be discarded:

- If alcoholic beverages are affected contact the MLCC to discuss the destruction of the products. If items are to be discarded, the cans or bottles may be able to be salvaged for a refund. In all instances contact the local MLCC inspector.
- Exposed food, bulk foods, fresh product, meat, poultry, fish and eggs.
- Any foods packaged in paper, plastic, cloth or fiber.
- Cardboard boxes, even if the contents appear dry, this would include cereals, grains, pastas, etc.
- Foods with cardboard seals, such as mayonnaise and salad dressing or foil or cellophane packages.
- Food in glass jars, including unopened jars with waxed paper, foil, cellophane or cloth covers.
- Foods, liquids, or beverages in crown capped bottles or containers with pull tab tops, corks or screw caps.
- All opened containers and packages; food in bags or canisters.
- Cans that are dented, leaking bulging or rusted.
- Cans may not be sold without all required labeling information. Therefore if the label is damaged, discard the item.

For disposal of food follow the protocol outlined in “Disposal of food” – under the *Food Safety after a Fire* section

Response to a Sewage Backup

A sewage backup means the overflow of sewage from equipment or plumbing facilities within a food establishment. A sewage backup would result in the closure of a food establishment.

Response:

The following are procedures that can be taken to address a food establishment during a sewage backup emergency.

- General- sewage from equipment directly connected to the plumbing system is either slow to drain or doesn't drain. Remove the affected equipment from service and remove the obstruction or call a service company. Thoroughly clean any spills with a detergent solution followed by a sanitizer solution. Keep foot traffic away from the area. Use other properly operating appliances or fixtures in the establishment.
- Hand washing- all hand washing sinks in the establishment do not drain. Use alcohol based hand sanitizer and avoid bare hand contact with food. A hand washing facility must be available in the toilet facility for operation to continue. Hot water from a potable source can be placed into an insulated container with spigot which can be turned on to allow clean, warm water to flow. Provide suitable hand cleaner, disposable towels and waste receptacle. If neither of the above procedures can be done the operation will be required to close.
- Toilet facilities- all toilet facilities do not drain. Discontinue operation.
- Culinary sinks- all sinks required for thawing food, washing fruits and vegetables, cooling food, etc. do not drain. Alternative procedures: Thaw food in the refrigerator or as part of the cooking process. Use pre-washed packaged produce. Use frozen/canned fruits and vegetables not requiring washing, use alternate cooling methods. Modify the menu to avoid procedures requiring the use of the culinary sink.

- Warewashing equipment- all dish machines, three compartment sink, pot sinks do not drain.

Alternative procedures: Discontinue ware washing and use single service items. Discontinue affected operations after supply of clean equipment, utensils, and single service items is exhausted.

- Janitor/Utility Sink – does not drain. Discontinue use of the sink. Dump mop water into the toilet (this method to be used on temporarily). Discontinue operation if the physical facility cannot be maintained in a sanitary condition.
- Continuous overflow of sewage into the establishment - Discontinue operation.

Recovery:

Determine the cause of the problem and take appropriate corrective action.

- In the case of plugged drain lines, a service company should be contacted to remove the obstruction. Worn or damaged plumbing to be replaced as needed.
- If the onsite sewage disposal system is malfunctioning, contact a licensed sewage hauler to pump the septic tank. If necessary barricade the affected area to keep the public and employees away from the exposed sewage. Make applicable repairs to the field.
- Personal protection equipment to be worn during cleanup.

General clean up:

- All damaged food equipment, utensils, linens and single service items must be destroyed or properly disposed.
- Floors, walls, furnishings, carpets, utensils and equipment damaged beyond salvage must be removed and replaced as necessary.
- Affected walls, floors and equipment surfaces must be cleaned with soap and water, rinsed and sanitized. Carpets should be either removed or effectively cleaned (i.e. steam).
- Remove wet materials. Dispose of any materials that cannot be effectively cleaned and sanitized.
- Remove any standing sewage

- Clean and sanitize any utensils and equipment in the affected area.
- Use a detergent solution to clean floors, equipment and other affected areas followed by a clean water rinse.
- Sanitize the floor and other affected areas by using a sanitizer and air dry the affected areas.
- Launder or discard mop heads and other cleaning aids that contacted the sewage.
- Hire a professional restoration company that has expertise in cleaning food establishments exposed to sewage backups.

The disposal of foods is generally the same procedure in any emergency action plan. See disposal outlined in “Disposal of food” – under the *Food Safety after a Fire* section.