

## FLOODING

Like sewage, flood waters are likely to contain microbiological contaminants which could jeopardize the safety of the food products. Flooding problems could include:

- Water pooling on a floor which can expose food, paper products, equipment, employees and the public to contaminants which may cause illness.
- A leaking roof which may contaminate food and surfaces with water which has been in contact with roof and ceiling materials as well as insects and bird droppings.

All necessary structural repairs and elimination of flood water must be addressed before operations resume.

## CONTAMINATED SURFACES

Any foods or single service items contaminated by flood waters must be discarded in the presence of Health Dept. Staff. Other contaminated surfaces must be cleaned and sanitized.

- **Be aware of the location of the facility in relation to flood areas.**
- **Have back-up regular and battery operated sump pumps.**
- **Check roof drains and roof conditions regularly.**

## SAFETY

It is important that caution be exercised while remediating problems due to loss of utilities, and that safety be considered in contingency plans. The use of equipment such as generators and the use of dry ice must be done cautiously to avoid injury.

## UTILITY INTERRUPTION

### WATER SERVICE

- Close Facility
- Contact Health Dept.
- Contact Water Dept. or Well Driller
- Department Verifies Restoration
- Re-Open with Dept. Approval

### SEWAGE TREATMENT

- Close Facility
- Contact Health Dept.
- Contact Professional for Repair
- Discard Contaminated Products
- Clean and Sanitize Surfaces
- Re-Open with Dept. Approval

### FLOODING

- Close Facility
- Contact Health Dept.
- Correct Problem
- Eliminate Flood Waters
- Discard Contaminated Products
- Clean and Sanitize Surfaces
- Re-Open with Health Dept. Approval

### FIRE

- Close Facility
- Contact Fire Dept., Building Dept., and Health Dept.
- Discard Contaminated Products
- Clean and Sanitize Surfaces
- Re-Open with Health Dept. Approval

### POWER OUTAGE

- Close Facility
- Contact Health Dept. and Utility Co.
- Keep Cold Food Storage Units Closed
- Restore Service
- Discard Adulterated Products
- Re-Open with Health Dept. Approval

## IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Health Department M - F 8:00 am - 4:30 pm After Hours Phone #	815-334-4585  815-344-7421
Commonwealth Edison	
Nicor Gas	
City Sewer Department	
City Water Department	
Well Repair Co.	
Septic System Repair Co.	
Septic Pumper	
Grease Trap Maintenance	
Generators	
Refrigerated Trucks	
Dry Ice	
Bagged Ice	
Bottled Water	



**McHenry County Department of Health**  
**Division of Environmental Health**  
 2200 N. Seminary Avenue  
 Woodstock, IL 60098  
 815-334-4585  
[www.mcdh.info](http://www.mcdh.info)



12/04

## McHENRY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

# COPING WITH UTILITY INTERRUPTIONS

## IN FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS



## UTILITY INTERRUPTION

Water, sewage disposal, electricity and gas service are all basic necessities that are required to operate a food establishment. At times, interruption of these services occur. Without basic services, there is a real threat to the safety of a food product. Interruptions to utilities may result in suspension of the health permit to operate the food establishment. Quick response and a contingency plan can minimize the impact to a food service operation.

## SEWAGE DISPOSAL INTERRUPTION

All water carried sewage shall be disposed of by means of a public sewage system or an approved septic system and both shall be constructed and operated in conformance with applicable state and local regulations. A back-up of sewage into a food facility or surfacing of sewage onto the ground creates an immediate public health threat which requires immediate closure of the food establishment and notification of the Health Dept.

### CONTAMINATED SURFACES

Any foods or single service items which come in contact with sewage must be discarded under the supervision of Health Dept. Staff. All other contaminated surfaces must be cleaned and sanitized. Restoration of the sewage disposal system must be verified by the Health Dept.

**Provide regular maintenance of private sewage disposal systems. Maintain a list of licensed plumbers who can respond on immediate notice.**

## WATER SUPPLY INTERRUPTION

Enough hot and cold potable water under pressure to meet the needs of the food establishment shall be provided during all times of operation. Should a water main break occur, water well pump or hot water heater malfunction, the operator is required to close until service is restored. Handwashing and proper cleaning and sanitizing cannot be performed if a safe water supply is not available. Patrons must have access to proper restroom and handwashing facilities.

### STEPS TO FOLLOW

Operators shall notify the Health Dept. in the event of a water supply interruption. To rectify the problem the food establishment shall work in conjunction with the following:

- Health Dept. Staff
- Licensed Plumber
- Licensed Water Well Driller
- Municipal Water Dept. (if applicable)



Verification of service restoration by the Health Dept. is required in order to resume operations. In some cases, laboratory analysis of a water sample may be required to confirm that the water supply is safe.

### CONTAMINATED WATER

In the case of contaminated water (i.e. boil order, unsatisfactory water sample) the use of bottled water and commercially bagged ice will be required to continue operations until a satisfactory water sample is verified via laboratory analysis. Water fed devices such as juice or soda dispensers can not be used until a safe water supply has been provided.

**Have a source for bottled water, bagged ice and canned soda.**

## POWER OUTAGES

Extended power outages jeopardize the safety of potentially hazardous foods. Interruptions to electric service require Health Dept. notification and closure of the facility. Cold potentially hazardous foods must be maintained at a temperature of 41°F or below. Should a power outage occur, cold food storage units should remain closed.

### RESTORING POWER

Upon restoration of power, food temperatures must be taken immediately using a calibrated, sanitized, metal stemmed thermometer. Should the loss of electrical service result in potentially hazardous food temperatures above 41°F, such foods will have to be discarded in the presence of Health Dept. Staff.

### BACK-UP GENERATORS

Facilities with back-up generators need not close, but should notify the Health Dept. of any extended outages.

**Have sources to obtain alternative refrigeration storage (i.e. refrigerator trucks). Have a source to obtain a portable generator.**

## FIRES

Once extinguished, fires shall be followed by immediate closure of the facility and notification of the Health Dept. The food facility may suffer a variety of contamination problems due to:

- Smoke
- Chemicals
- Water
- Heat
- Fallen Building Materials

## FOOD CONTAMINATION

Any food which is subjected to a physical or chemical contamination or temperature abuse must be properly discarded in the presence of Health Dept. Staff. Contaminated or adulterated single service items and any severely damaged equipment must be properly disposed of. To resume operations after a fire, all health, building and fire code concerns must be addressed.



**Do regular fire safety audits and extinguisher checks. Provide regular staff training regarding fire procedures.**

## GAS SERVICE

The impact on a food facility due to interruption of natural gas service depends on which appliances are gas powered. The most critical would be hot water heaters and hot food holding units. Hot water under pressure (110°F minimum) is required during all times of operation for proper washing, rinsing and sanitizing of equipment. Hot water is also required for handwashing by both employees and patrons. Lack of hot water requires immediate closure of the facility and notification of the Health Dept. Hot, potentially hazardous foods must be maintained at 135 degrees F or above. Lack of hot holding units should be reported to the Dept. for determination of proper action.

**Have a source of alternative (insulated, non-mechanical) hot food holding units (i.e. Cambro).**