



INDUSTRY BULLETIN

for Florida's Foodservice Industry

SUBJECT: EMERGENCY RECOVERY GUIDELINES

Bulletin 2023-03

August 29, 2023

The Division of Hotels and Restaurants urges all state food service operators to take special measures during power or water outages and other emergency conditions. All public food service establishments must take action after these events to offset the effects of loss of electricity, flooding, compromised potable water supplies or damage sufficient to contaminate stored food.

5 Keys for Safer Food in Areas Hit by Disasters: 1) Keep hands, food and equipment clean; 2) Separate raw and cooked food; 3) Cook foods thoroughly; 4) Keep foods at safe temperatures; and 5) Use only safe water and food.

FOOD SAFETY AND PROTECTION

Food poses the greatest threat of causing a foodborne illness if it has warmed due to lack of refrigeration or has been contaminated by floodwater, storm debris or other contaminants. When these circumstances occur, public food service establishments must consider the following precautions:

- Add bags of ice or dry ice to refrigerators and freezers prior to the emergency if notice is given and loss of power for an extended time is expected.
- Do not operate if your establishment has no safe water supply or electrical power (or generators) to run essential equipment.
- Do not operate if your establishment has no roof or is not structurally sound.
- **While power is off**, keep the doors to freezers and coolers closed in order to maintain temperature as long as possible.
- **When power is restored**, identify all time/temperature control for safety foods (TCS) that may have been above 41°F or below 135°F for more than four hours. TCS foods that have been out of temperature for more than 4 hours must be properly discarded.
- You can safely re-freeze thawed foods that still contain ice crystals and are 41°F or less.
- Discard any food that has been contaminated or come in contact with floodwater, sewage, smoke, fumes, chemicals, or other liquid contaminants
- Discard vulnerable containers of food such as those containing peel-off covers, scored pop tops, waxed cardboard, cork or screw tops or paraffin seals such as glass or plastic containers of catsup, dressing, milk, mayonnaise, soda, beer, sauces, etc., if the containers have been exposed to contamination.
- Discard foods packaged in soft, porous containers like cardboard boxes, paper, foil, plastic and cellophane such as boxes or bags of food, cereal, flour, sugar, rice, salt, etc., if the packages have been exposed to contamination.
- Discard shell eggs exposed to any contamination – the shell is porous; and do not use swollen, leaking or damaged canned goods.
- Smoke damage to food is difficult to assess. Insoluble tars and plastics and their byproducts suspended in smoke are a major concern. Discard all foods exposed to smoke.
- Undamaged, commercially prepared foods in all-metal cans can be saved if you remove labels that can come off, thoroughly wash the cans, rinse them, and then disinfect them with a sanitizing solution consisting of 1 tablespoon of bleach per gallon of potable water. Finally, re-label the containers with a marker.
- Maintain hot foods at temperatures of 135°F or above and cold foods at temperatures of 41°F or below.
- Use single-service articles whenever possible. Discard single-service items such as paper or plastic plates, cups, plastic utensils, lids, straws, etc., if the items have been exposed to contamination.
- Keep food covered and protected from dust, dirt, insects, vermin and other contaminants. Minimize handling of foods before, during and after preparation. Wash hands with potable or boiled water.
- **WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT.**

FOOD EQUIPMENT

- If the establishment was exposed to contamination, clean and sanitize all equipment and food-contact surfaces with potable or boiled water. Do not operate until the entire establishment has been thoroughly cleaned and sanitized or disinfected.
- All water filters on equipment should be removed and replaced if not designed to be cleaned in place.

BOIL WATER NOTICE

If a [Boil Water Notice](#) is issued by the local health authorities, it means the water supply may have been contaminated. Do not serve water in any form. Disconnect or turn off water vending machines, drinking fountains, misters, ice-making units and post-mix beverage machines and prevent their use until **advised by the local County Health Department directly or through the news media that the BOIL WATER NOTICE has been rescinded (lifted)**. **AFTER the BOIL WATER NOTICE is lifted, allow water to run for five minutes at each tap to flush the lines with safe water.** Refer to the Boil Water Notice for more information

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL REGULATION

Ron DeSantis, Governor

Division of Hotels and Restaurants

Melanie S. Griffin, Secretary