

Food Service Plan During Emergencies

A Food Safety and Emergency Hazard Guide for Food Establishments

Town of Lexington
Office of Community Development
Health Division

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Water Service Interruption No Water or Low Water Pressure

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Initial Response

Water service interruption can be the loss of water

In the event that there is an interruption in water service, the person-in-charge must note the time and date of when the water service was interrupted. The person-in-charge should also contact Lexington Health Division (781-862-0500 extension 200) or after hours call Gerard Cody, Health Director at 617-212-1131. Without adequate, clean water operations must be discontinued immediately



Food Safety

Interruption to water service can jeopardize food safety:

- Broken water main line, malfunctioning well, and/or worn-out water heaters can create unsafe conditions.
- Without adequate, clean water, employees cannot properly wash their hands, cook and prepare foods, and clean equipment, tableware, and utensils properly.
- With no clean water, foods that require washing prior to cooking can become contaminated.

Ongoing and Alternative Procedures

There may be multiple systems affected by water service interruption. The following are a list of some possible affected systems:

Cleaning and Sanitizing

Water service interruption can affect the cleaning and sanitizing equipment, tableware, utensils, and the physical facility. Alternatively, single-use items can be used in place of tableware and utensils. Commercially bottled water, water brought in from a licensed drinking water tanker truck, and/or water brought in from an approved public water supply can be used to clean and sanitize equipment, tableware, and utensils. When the supply of clean tableware and utensils and/or when the cleanliness of the equipment or physical facility compromises food safety, discontinue operations.

Cooking and Food Preparations

Interruption to water service can affect some food preparations and cooking processes may require the use of clean water. To prepare or cook foods, commercially bottled water, water brought in from an approved public water supply, or water from a licensed drinking water tanker truck can be used in these processes. The menu can also be restricted to items that do not require water. Operations must be discontinued if these alternative procedures are not available to avoid serving contaminated foods.

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Drinking Water

In the event of water service interruption, the food establishment must use commercially bottled water, arrange for a licensed drinking water tanker truck to bring in water, and/or have water brought in from an approved public water supply. If these alternative procedures for drinking water are not available, then discontinue operations.

Fountain Drinks

Post mix fountain drinks will no longer be available for use during interruption to water service. Fountain drink service should be discontinued immediately.

Hand Washing

Interruption to water service can result in unsafe hand washing procedures. Thus, bare hand contact must be suspended until clean water is restored. Alternatively, employees may use chemically treated towelettes for hand cleaning if food items are prepackaged and otherwise protected from possible contamination from hand contact AND an alternate location for hand washing has been identified. Another option for hand washing is to have potable water from an approved public water supply system. This water should be placed in a clean, sanitized container with a spout which can be turned to allow clean, warm water to flow over hands and drain into a sink. Soap and disposable towels must be provided if this method is employed. Additionally, the person-in-charge should contact the Health Division for approved hand washing procedures. If none of these hand washing alternatives can be met, then discontinue operations.

Ice

The production of ice will be affected by the interruption to water service. Commercially manufactured ice should be used.

Restroom Facilities

Restroom facilities will become inoperable in the event there is interruption to water service. Alternative restroom facilities, such as portable toilets, with adequate hand washing facilities which are easily accessible to employees during hours of operation can be used until water service is restored. If another alternative for restroom and hand washing facilities cannot be arranged, then discontinue operations.



Recovery

A food establishment that was ordered or otherwise required to cease operations may NOT re-open until authorization has been granted by the Lexington Health Division.

When water service is restored:

- Flush pipes and faucets by running cold water for at least five (5) minutes, hot water faucets for at least 15 minutes for a 40-gallon water tank or 30 minutes for

an 80 gallon hot water tank or larger OR follow instructions from the water service provider, the Health Division (781-862-0500 ext. 200).

- Flush all equipment that has water connections, such as post mix fountain drink machines, coffee and tea urns, ice machines, dish washers, and other equipment with water connections.
- Clean and sanitize all equipment with water connections according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Run water softeners through a regeneration cycle.
- Change all filters.
- Flush drinking fountains by running continuously for five (5) minutes.

Before re-opening the food establishment after an interruption to water service, call the Lexington Health Division (781-862-0500 extension 200) for an inspection.

Planning Ahead

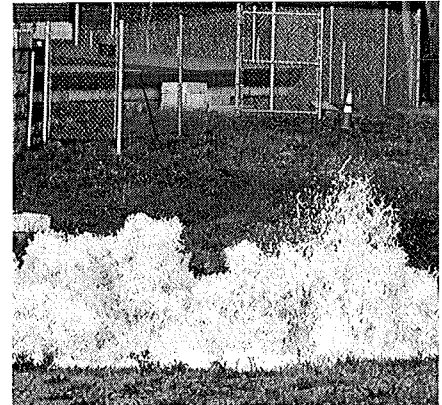
The following are some ways in which an emergency action plan can be developed in the event of water service interruption:

- Designate a person-in-charge – this person will be responsible for initial response and ongoing assessments during the emergency to ensure consistent compliance with food safety requirements.
- Maintain a supply of single-use tableware and utensils.
- Be in contact with a commercial bottled water supplier or a licensed drinking water truck and develop a business contract for this water supply.
- Locate where to get access to an approved public water supply.
- Have a stock of suitable containers to transport water.
- Keep a range of disposable items in stock (gloves, towels, hand sanitizer).
- Develop a business contract for a commercial ice supplier.
- Construct a plan for restroom facilities.
- Create a list of equipment that is connected to water lines.
- Maintain a list of contact information of the local health department, plumber, water supplier, ice supplier, and utility companies.

Water Supply Contamination **Biological, Chemical, or Physical Contamination**

Initial Response

Water supply contamination can be In the event that there is contamination to the water supply, the person-in-charge must note the time and date. The person-in-charge should contact the Lexington Health Division (781-862-0500 extension 200) or after hours call Gerard Cody, Health Director at 617-212-1131 at the onset of water interruption. If a "Boil Water Advisory" has been issued, the person-in-charge must assess the extent of the situation. Operations may continue if the establishment implements the Food Service Plan as outlined below. If the food establishment cannot meet the requirements outlined below, discontinue operations.



Food Safety

Contamination to a water supply can jeopardize food safety:

- A contaminated water supply may contain bacteria, chemicals, toxins, and other microorganisms that can cause illnesses.
- Safe water is essential to operate a food establishment.

Ongoing and Alternative Procedures

When a "Boil Water Advisory" has been issued, water must remain at a rolling boil for at least one (1) minute. Large volumes of water should be brought to a rolling boil for at least five (5) minutes. Chemical disinfection is not generally an option for food establishments because of the lack of onsite equipment for testing chemical residuals.

If there is a contamination to the water supply, several operations may become affected:

Beverages Made With Water

Discontinue use of beverages made with water, including but not limited to post mix carbonated beverages, auto-fill coffee makers, instant hot water dispenser, teas, and juices.

Cleaning and Sanitizing

Cleaning and sanitizing tableware and utensils can be affected by contamination of the water supply. As an alternative, the food establishment should use single-use tableware and utensils.

Cooking

Contamination to the water supply can affect cooking processes. For cooking processes that require water, use commercially bottled water, water from a licensed

drinking water tanker truck, water that was brought in from an approved public water supply and/or water that has been at a rolling boiling for at least five (5) minutes must be used until the advisory is lifted. If water from these sources are not available, discontinue operations.

Drinking Water

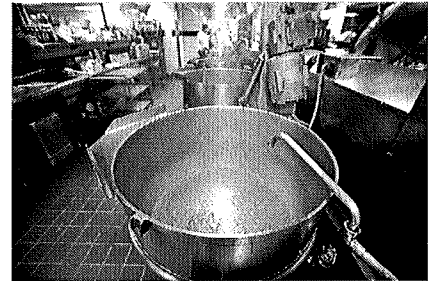
When there is contamination to the water supply, the food establishment must use commercially bottled water, arrange for a licensed drinking water tanker truck to bring in water, and/or water brought in from an approved public water supply.

Food Preparations

Foods preparations that require the use of clean water can be affected by contamination to water supply. Once a "Boil Water Advisory" has been issued, any foods prepared with water prior to the advisory must be discarded. Foods can be prepared using commercially bottled water, water from a licensed drinking water tanker truck, water that was brought in from an approved public water supply and/or boiled water. Operations must be discontinued if these alternative food preparations procedures are not available.

Hand Washing

Contamination to the water supply can result in unsafe hand washing procedures. Thus, tap water should not be used for hand washing and bare hand contact with ready-to-eat foods must be avoided. Heated commercially bottled water, water that has been at a rolling boil for at least five (5) minutes, water from a licensed drinking water tanker truck, and/or water brought in from an approved public water supply can be used for hand washing. Tap water can be used for hand washing followed by a Food Code compliant hand sanitizer.



Ice

Ice that was made prior to the "Boil Water Advisory" must be discarded and further production of ice must also be discontinued until advisory is lifted. Bins that hold ice must be cleaned and sanitized. Commercially manufactured ice from an unaffected water supply should be used until the advisory is lifted.

Restroom Facilities

Patrons of the food establishment may use tap water for hand washing given that hand sanitizer is made available at each sink. The person-in-charge should post a notice to alert patrons to the contamination to the water supply.

Spray Misters

Spray misters used to spray produce, seafood, meat cases, and other foods cannot be used. Any foods that were potentially exposed to contaminated water must be discarded. Until the advisory is lifted, discontinue use of spray misters.

Thawing of Frozen Foods

Frozen foods should not be thawed with tap water. Thaw frozen foods in the refrigerator or as a part of the cooking process.

Washing Produce

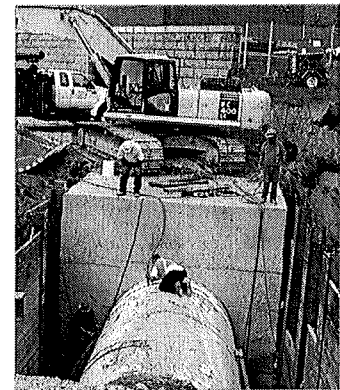
For produce that needs to be washed, do not use tap water in the event that there is contamination to water supply. To wash produce, use commercially bottled water, water from a licensed drinking water tanker truck, water that was brought in from an approved public water supply and/or water that has been at a rolling boiling for at least five (5) minutes. As an alternative, use pre-washed packaged produce or frozen or canned fruits and vegetables.

Recovery

A food establishment that was ordered or otherwise required to cease operations may NOT re-open until authorization has been granted by the Lexington Health Division.

Once the “Boil Water Advisory” has been lifted:

- Flush all pipes and faucets – follow the directions issued by the local board of health or other regulatory agency OR as a general rule, run cold water faucets for at least five (5) minutes, hot water faucets for at least 15 minutes for a 40-gallon water tank or a minimum of 30 minutes for an 80 gallon hot water tank or larger.
- Flush, clean, and sanitize all equipment with waterline connections such as post mix beverage machines, ice machines, spray misters, coffee and tea urns, dishwashers and other equipment with water connections.
- Run water softeners through a regeneration cycle.
- Flush drinking fountains by running continuously for five (5) minutes.



Before re-opening the food establishment after an interruption to water service, call the Lexington Health Division (781-862-0500 extension 200) for an inspection.

Planning Ahead

The following are some ways in which an emergency action plan can be developed in the event of contamination to the water supply:

- Designate a person-in-charge – this person will be responsible for initial response and ongoing assessments during the emergency to ensure consistent compliance with food safety requirements.
- Maintain a supply of single-use tableware and utensils.
- Be in contact with a commercial bottled water supplier or a licensed drinking water truck and develop a business contract for this water supply.
- Locate where to get access to an approved public water supply.
- Have a stock of suitable containers to transport water.
- Keep a range of disposable items in stock (gloves, towels, hand sanitizer).

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- Develop a business contract for a commercial ice supplier.
- Create a list of equipment that is connected to water lines.
- Maintain a list of contact information of the local health department, water supplier, ice supplier, and utility companies.