



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES

DAVID L. LAKEY, M.D.
COMMISSIONER

P.O. Box 149347
Austin, Texas 78714-9347
1-888-963-7111
TTY: 1-800-735-2989
www.dshs.state.tx.us

September 18, 2008

Reopening a Retail Food Establishment After an Emergency

The mission of food safety is to reduce the risk of foodborne illness by safeguarding food through proper storage, preparation and service. This objective remains true during and after emergencies. The Department of State Health Services is providing the following information to help retail food establishments reopen after an emergency and provide a safe food product.

A retail food establishment operator must contact the appropriate regulatory authority for approval prior to reopening after an emergency or disaster.

Food Safety With No Power and No Water

- Evaluate the safety of the remaining food in the establishment.
 - Potentially hazardous food that has been out of temperature control (above 41° F) for more than four hours must be discarded. Check the temperature of the food with a thermometer.
 - Packaged non-potentially hazardous food, including canned foods, must be discarded if there are signs of water damage or if the package seal has been broken.
- If water cannot be obtained from an approved source (bottled or by water hauler), the food establishment shall not be reopened.
- Food preparation surfaces, cooking equipment and utensils must be cleaned with soapy water and sanitized with a solution of ¼ cup chlorine bleach per gallon of water.
- Potentially hazardous food may be served if there is equipment to hold food at or below 41° F. An ice chest with a drain is acceptable if ice from an approved source is available.
- Only disposable paper products (plates, cups) and plastic eating utensils may be utilized.
- Outdoor cooking may be done on a grill, barbecue pit, etc., if there is overhead protection and the equipment is placed on a hard surface (asphalt or concrete, no dirt or gravel).
- All food must be cooked and served with no holding.
- A temporary handwash facility must be created using a water cooler with a spigot and a catch basin. The cooler must be filled and kept with water at a minimum of 100° F from an approved source. Soap and paper towels must be available.
 - An approved hand sanitizer must be used after handwashing.
 - Single-use gloves may be used in addition to handwashing.

Food Safety With Water and No Power

- Evaluate the safety of the remaining food in the establishment.

- Potentially hazardous food that has been out of temperature control (above 41° F) for more than four hours must be discarded. Check the temperature of the food with a thermometer.
- Packaged non-potentially hazardous food, including canned foods, must be discarded if there are signs of water damage or if the package seal has been broken.
- The water should be assumed to be unsafe, unless the authorized water system official has stated that the water is safe to drink.
- The water should be purified by:
 - Boiling the water vigorously (rolling boil)(if there is a heat source) for one to three minutes, or
 - Adding eight drops (1/8 teaspoon) of unscented bleach per one gallon of water. The water should be stirred and allowed to purify for 30 minutes.
- Food preparation surfaces, cooking equipment and utensils must be cleaned with soapy water and sanitized with a solution of 1/4 cup chlorine bleach per gallon of water.
- Potentially hazardous food may be served if there is equipment to hold food at or below 41° F. An ice chest with a drain is acceptable if ice from an approved source is available.
- Only disposable paper products (plates, cups) and plastic eating utensils may be utilized.
- Outdoor cooking may be done on a grill, barbecue pit, etc., if there is overhead protection and the equipment is placed on a hard surface (asphalt or concrete, no dirt or gravel).
- All food must be cooked and served with no holding.
- A temporary handwash facility must be created using a water cooler with a spigot and a catch basin. The cooler must be filled with water that has been boiled or purified. The water temperature must be kept at a minimum of 100° F. Soap and paper towels must be available.
 - An approved hand sanitizer must be used after handwashing.
 - Single-use gloves may be used in addition to handwashing.

Food Safety With Power and No Water

- Evaluate the safety of the remaining food in the establishment.
 - Potentially hazardous food that has been out of temperature control (above 41° F) for more than four hours must be discarded. Check the temperature of the food with a thermometer.
 - Packaged non-potentially hazardous food, including canned foods, should be discarded if there are signs of water damage or if the package seal has been broken.
- If water cannot be obtained from an approved source (bottled or by water hauler), the food establishment shall not be reopened.
- Food preparation surfaces, cooking equipment and utensils must be cleaned with soapy water and sanitized with a solution of 1/4 cup chlorine bleach per gallon of water.
- Potentially hazardous food may be served if the refrigeration equipment can hold food at or below 41° F.
- Only disposable paper products (plates, cups) and plastic eating utensils may be utilized.
- All food must be cooked and served with no holding.
- A temporary handwash facility must be created using a water cooler with a spigot and a catch basin. The cooler must be filled and kept with water at a minimum of 100° F from an approved source. Soap and paper towels must be available.
 - An approved hand sanitizer must be used after handwashing.
 - Single-use gloves may be used in addition to handwashing.
- If power is obtained from an individual generator, the generator must be operated outside.
 - The capacity of the generator must be carefully evaluated to determine what equipment can be safely operated.

Additional questions or concerns can be directed to the Food Establishment Group at (512) 834-6753.