



## Emergencies in Food Service Operation/Retail Food Establishments (Power Outage, Floods, Water Boil Advisory)

<b>Original Effective Date:</b> July 28, 2017	<b>Review / Revision Date:</b>	<b>Environmental Health Procedure:</b> 2017.07.050
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**Maintenance Steward:** Supervisor(s) of the Food Safety Division      History:  New    Revised    Archived

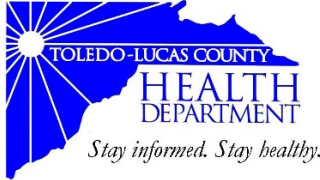
**Organizational Scope:**  
 Full Agency    Administration    Community Services    Environmental Health    Health Services

**Frequency of Review:**  
 Annually    Biennially    5 Years    As Needed    Other:

**Location:**  
*G-Drive:* G: → Users → Common → Policies & Procedures  
*Website:* [www.lucascountyhealth.com/employee-login/](http://www.lucascountyhealth.com/employee-login/)  
*Hardcopy:* A manual with compilation of policies and SOP will be maintained and available by supervisor.  
*Archived Version(s):* NA

**Requisite Signatures**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _____ Health Commissioner	08-01-17 _____ Date
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _____ Director of Environmental Health & Community Services	7-28-2017 _____ Date
_____	_____



## Emergencies in Food Service Operation/Retail Food Establishments (Power Outage, Floods, Water Boil Advisory)

### I. Scope

This procedure applies to all Food Safety Sanitarians in the Environmental Health Division of the Toledo-Lucas County Health Department (TLCHD).

### II. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to provide Food Safety Sanitarians with an outline of steps to conduct various inspections of Food Service Operations (FSO) and Retail Food Establishments (RFE) during emergency situations that may include power outage, water boil advisories, flooding, fires and sewage back-ups.

### III. Background

All FSOs and RFEs should be prepared for times of emergencies by having a documented contingency plan that detail steps that would be taken. Unfortunately, there may be times where such emergencies may require an FSO or RFE to close until further notice. Each emergency can be handled in accordance to the following procedures but in all circumstances, if food safety is compromised, the operation should act to in the best interest to protect the consumers.

There are recourses to take if the FSO/RFE are operating and there is an immediate danger to the public which includes asking the operation to voluntarily close to immediate suspension of the FSO/RFE license.

### IV. Procedure

#### A. Power Outage (Electrical problems)

1. During power outages, the biggest concern in FSO and RFE will be temperature control. Methods used during emergencies may be different than standard operating procedures, but each situation must be evaluated on a case by case basis.
2. Professional Judgment must be used in such circumstances but if unsure, contact your immediate supervisor. There are many variables that will have to be taken into consideration before a decision is made. The variables to consider are as follow:
  - Length of disaster: How many hours has it been since the beginning of the power outage?

- Types of food: Different foods have different temperature requirements. (I.e. cut melons versus whole intact melons).
- Size/Conditions of refrigeration units: A new unit could possibly hold cold temperatures longer than an old one or one that is not maintained properly.
- Time of year: Product held in the summer may not last as long as product held in the winter time.
- Extent of building damage: Buildings completely destroyed are for the most part easiest to determine, almost everything will be destroyed.
- Temperature of refrigeration unit when loss of power occurs: A unit that is at 41 degrees F at the beginning of the power outage may go into the danger zone quicker than a unit that had a temperature of 36 degrees F.
- First priority: Time/ temperature controlled for safety foods (Potentially hazardous food) should have priority over other areas of the operation because if these product are still in safe temperature zone, they may be saved.
- Frozen Foods: The uniform food code establishes no temperatures for freezing, however it does state that frozen foods shall remain frozen. Therefore, thawed foods should not be refrozen.
- During a power outage, it may be possible for the food facility to obtain a refrigerated truck for their suppliers.
- The facility may be able to obtain back-up generators to use. However make sure the generator has enough power to operate the refrigerated cases, coolers, and freezers.
- You may inform the operator regarding the USDA guidelines in times of power outage information which can be found at [https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/d3506874-2867-4190-a941-d511d3fcae71/Keep\\_Your\\_Food\\_Safe\\_During\\_Emergencies.pdf?MOD=AJPERES](https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/d3506874-2867-4190-a941-d511d3fcae71/Keep_Your_Food_Safe_During_Emergencies.pdf?MOD=AJPERES)

## B. FIRE

When a fire occurs at a FSO or RFE, the health department will often be notified by authorities of affected jurisdictions. After the initial notification, a Supervisor will contact the Sanitarian for the district in which the fire occurred. If that Sanitarian cannot be contacted or chooses not to respond to the fire call, the Supervisor shall contact other Sanitarians in accordance with the seniority list.

1. **Sanitarian Response:** When responding to a fire at an FSO or RFE, the Sanitarian must evaluate the following:
  - a. The extent of the fire. Was the fire external or internal to the building? Was the fire isolated to one area or did it spread? How long did it burn before being put out?
  - b. The extent of smoke damage. How much smoke was produced? How far did smoke travel throughout the building? Can you see evidence of soot on ceiling tiles, Styrofoam containers, equipment and external packaging?
  - c. Were fire extinguishers or fire suppression systems (Ansul) systems discharged? How far reaching is the spread of chemicals? Has chemical material been tracked to other areas by fire crews or employees?
  - d. The extent of any water damage.
  - e. The loss of electricity during the fire. Was the power turned off and for how long?

**Note:** It may be helpful to gather this information from fire department personnel, as well as operators, due to the fact that some operators may be too upset to accurately recall specifics about the fire.

2. **Assessing compromised food and food contact materials:** After the Sanitarian has assessed the severity of the fire, he or she must determine the status of all food and food contact materials affected by the fire. Food exposed to fire can be compromised by three factors: the heat of the fire, smoke fumes and chemicals used to fight the fire.
  - a. **Heat:** Food in cans and jars may appear to be okay, but if they have been close to the heat of a fire, they may no longer be edible. Heat may activate food spoilage bacteria. Also, if the heat is extreme, the cans or jars themselves can split or rupture, rendering food unsafe. Scorched or melted food contact materials (i.e. utensils, pans, containers, and racks) can no longer be properly cleaned and sanitized, therefore harboring harmful bacteria if used.
  - b. **Fumes:** Toxic fumes released from burning material can contaminate food. Any type of open food or food stored in permeable packaging (i.e. cardboard, plastic wrap) should be

discarded. In a smoke-filled kitchen, all open food should be discarded. Fumes can also contaminate even foods in refrigerators and freezers if the seal is not airtight.

- c. **Chemicals**: Chemicals used to fight fires contain toxic materials and can contaminate food and food contact surfaces. The chemicals cannot be washed off the food. Foods that are exposed to chemicals from a fire extinguisher or deployed suppression system must be discarded. This includes open foods and foods stored in permeable containers (i.e. cardboard, plastic wrapping, screw top jars and bottles).

3. **Disposition of contaminated food or food contact materials:** All fires are different. The Sanitarian must make a good assessment of the severity of the fire and the extent of any smoke damage.

- a. All discarded food must be properly documented on the Standard Inspection Form. Foods may be discarded due to contamination, exposure to heat or because of temperature abuse.

4. **Any area where chemical/water fire suppression was used:**

- a. All open food (to include ice and fryer oil).
- b. Food in any container that is not airtight and cannot be washed.
- c. All open disposable plates, cups, utensils, to-go containers and napkins.
- d. All opened wrapping materials (deli paper, plastic wrap, foil, sandwich wrapping paper, parchment paper, food storage bags and napkins).
- e. All surfaces (to include floors, walls and ceilings) must be thoroughly decontaminated to remove chemical toxins. All food contact surfaces must be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized prior to use after a fire.

### C. Flood

Flooding can occur after heavy rain events in our area. Food services in areas subject to floods should be ready to raise refrigerators or freezers off the floor. Floodwaters may also carry silt, raw sewage, oil, or chemical waste which may contaminate foods and contact surfaces.

1. All foods shall be discarded if contaminated by floodwater except that canned goods can be salvaged if labels remain intact.

#### D. Sewage Back-up in FSO/RFE

Sewage back-up is when sewage comes up out of the floor drains or other equipment plumbed to the sewage system in a FSO or RFE. If the grease trap is overflowing or leaking it is considered to be sewage back-up.

1. **Definition of Sewage:** OAC 3717-1-01- *Sewage means liquid waste containing animal or vegetable in suspension or solution and may include liquids containing chemicals in solution.* Sewage is considered a critical violation and its presence in a kitchen is a potential source of bacterial and chemical contamination.
  - a. At the time of the sewage back-up discovery the sanitarian must call the supervisor immediately to inform the supervisor of the extent of the situation.
  - b. If sewage is actively backing up from the floor drains in a food service, the operation must close immediately and cease all food preparation activities.
  - c. If sewage is actively coming up out of a sink in a food service the operation must close immediately.
  - d. In both of these cases the appropriate service personnel must be called to correct the problem in the sewer drainage system.
  - e. **Grease Traps:** If sewage is leaking from a grease trap, the trap must be opened and cleaned out. If the grease trap continues to leak, the appropriate service personnel must be called to correct the problem with the grease trap and the information shall be referred to Environmental Services.
  - f. **After the Drains are cleared:** Any food product that has come into contact with sewage must be disposed of immediately. This includes any product in cardboard or the cardboard itself and also all types of single service items such as plates, napkins, cups, etc.
  - g. **Clean-Up:** All surfaces which sewage has touched must be cleaned of particulate matter then the surfaces must be sanitized as specified in the Ohio Uniform Food Safety Code.
  - h. **Tracking Sewage through Food Service:** Depending on the extent of the sewage back-up the facility must be careful to clean up and contain the sewage without contaminating the floors throughout the foodservice.

#### E. Water Boil Advisory/ No Water

Water service can be interrupted or contaminated for any number of reasons from construction accidents to fire department demands to natural disasters.

1. If a boil advisory is issued or if a FSO/RFE has a loss of water service, any operation that prepares, cooks or cleans foods should follow the guidelines as set forth in the Water Boil Advisory information packet.
  - a. If the FSO/RFE cannot arrange to have potable (safe) water to cook, clean, serve and wash hands, they must CLOSE until they can put the proper safeguards in place.

## **X Maintenance**

### **A. Review**

1. The FSO/RFE Emergency SOP is to be reviewed every five (5) years to ensure compliance with both agency and accreditation standards.
2. If Sections of the Ohio Revised Code 3717, Ohio Administrative Code sections 3701-21-2.4 or 901:3-4-06 are revised, the FSO/RFE emergency standard operating procedures will be reviewed and modified to comply with any required changes.

### **B. Revision**

1. All changes made to this SOP are to be noted on the **Record of Change**. Substantial changes will require renewed signatures from all applicable parties. This includes changes to the intent, scope, procedures, or policy statement.
2. Changes in style, format, grammar or minor error correction will not require renewed signatures but must be indicated on the Record of Change.

# Record of Change

(Required for all procedures)

Date of Change	Changes Made By	Changes Made/Notes	Approved By