



TOWN OF HALIFAX

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Board of Health

499 Plymouth St., Halifax, MA 02338
Telephone (781) 293 6768 * Fax (781) 293 1738

Food Establishment Emergency Plan

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The following Emergency Plan for Food Establishments is intended to offer guidance for establishments permitted in Halifax to prepare and serve food for the public so that public health may be protected. It is basic guidance only. When in doubt, please call the Halifax Board of Health and other agencies, as the situation requires.

This booklet is to remain on the premises at all times, be readily available to the staff and be reviewed and updated at least once a year and with new staff as they are hired.

Please familiarize yourself with the book and complete the contact information as it applies to your establishment.

Thanks to all who responded with ideas for how food establishments can be better prepared for emergencies. In particular, thank you to Mr. Raymond Messier, owner of Halifax's Dunkin Donuts, for bringing to my attention his recently updated emergency plan. This plan is modeled after his. It contains the basic foreseeable situations and some steps to be taken. Additional information is available at the Board of Health.

You may add your own situations and protocol to this for guidance and training at your establishment but do not change in any way what the Board of Health has given to you here.

Thank you for your anticipated cooperation in preparing for emergencies in Halifax. We can all benefit by being prepared.

Sincerely,

Cathleen Drinan, Health Agent
Halifax Board of Health

Name of Establishment:

(The following information is important when reporting an emergency. Do not assume that your staff knows the address and phone number of your establishment.)

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Contact information:

List name, address, work and home phone, fax, email, cell phone, any contact information.

Owner:

Name _____

Address _____

Work phone _____

Home phone _____

Cell phone _____

Email _____

Fax _____

Night Manager:

Name _____

Address _____

Work phone _____

Home phone _____

Cell phone _____

Email _____

Maintenance:

HVAC _____

Pest Management _____

Cleaning _____

Septage Hauler _____

Electric _____

Plumbing _____

Equipment _____

Day Manager:

Name _____

Address _____

Work phone _____

Home phone _____

Cell phone _____

Email _____

Fax _____

In Case of Personal Injury

- Put on Safety Gloves whenever assisting someone with an injury, especially a cut or wound.
- When in doubt, give a shout: If you are unsure in a situation involving an injury, call 911. Do not try to help someone if you are unsure of what to do. Your actions could make the problem worse.
- The Closest Emergency Room to Halifax is Brockton Hospital. It is located on Route 123 in Brockton and the phone number is 508-941-7400
- In case of a burn, run the affected area under cold water and call the Fire Department to see if there is a paramedic on duty. If a paramedic is there, you can go to the Halifax Fire Station to have the burn looked at. Their number is 781-293-2323. If you cannot be helped by the local Fire Dept., you will have to go to the Emergency Room.
- In case of a cut or gash, put on gloves, wrap the affected area and apply pressure to stop the bleeding. If bleeding persists, take the person to the ER or call 911.
- In case of a head or neck injury, broken bone or a severe fall, call 911 and keep the person talking until help arrives.
- After attending to the injured person, please call a General Manager immediately. They will help you with the appropriate steps in filling out an accident report.

General Managers:

Name:

Phone:

- If an injury occurs on the customer side of the counter, you must notify your Manager, as they would be liable for the situation.

In Case of Refrigeration Failure

- ❖ Move all items from refrigerator that is not working and place them into a refrigerator that is working.
- ❖ Call your Manager and owner so that they can contact the appropriate person to fix the refrigerator.
- ❖ If the Walk-in cooler fails, call the Manger/Owner and Maintenance Department immediately as you will have no room in other refrigerators for the items within the walk-in.
- ❖ If food has gone out of temperature (above 45), contact the Board of Health and discuss the disposal with the Health Agent.
- ❖ Call the Board of Health at 781 293 6768. Leave a message if no one answers.
- ❖ Then call the dispatcher at 781-293-5761. They will contact the health agent.
- ❖ The unit will have to be washed and sanitized before being used again.
- ❖ Having the health agent witness the disposal of food can be useful documentation for insurance purposes.

In Case of Power Failure

Contact your General Manager and the owner if they have left for the day.

If power stays out for more than an hour and/or if food has gone out of temperature, contact the Board of Health at 781-293-6768. If no one answers, leave a message and then call the dispatcher at the Police station at 781-293-5761. Tell them of the problem and request they contact the health agent.

Please follow these steps if you lose power.

- If you have customers in the store, please finish their orders as best you can and make sure you tell new customers that you have no power before taking their order.
- If the power outage means that you cannot handle food safely, then discontinue serving food.
- Turn off all machines, this will prevent them from burning out when the power returns.
- Check all refrigerator temperatures, but make sure to open the refrigerators as little as possible as the cold air will escape more rapidly.
- Find the Electric Panel and turn off the breakers labeled A/C or rooftop A/C or Air Conditioner(s).
- Your Manager and someone from the Board of Health will then determine whether or not to close and will assist in closing down and removing product that has gone above safe temperatures.

Questions for Review:

Do you have a generator? Cooler? Supply of ice? Sterno? Gas stove? How long can you remain open and what activities can be performed safely without power?

In Case of Fire: Call Dial 911

You are located at:

Your Phone Number is:

There is a Fire Extinguisher located at

Look for the locator sign mounted above it.

If a fire cannot be controlled by the fire extinguisher, pull one of the fire alarms located _____ and leave the building. Please wait at *(a predetermined destination that has been discussed with staff)* _____

_____ until the Fire Department arrives. **DO NOT** leave the parking lot, as the Fire Department will want to make sure that everyone has left the building and is accounted for. Please do not move your car unless you are instructed to by the Fire Department. Once the building has been cleared and the Fire Department has given you the O.K. to enter the building, please call your General Manager or the owner to let them know what happened. They will then instruct you of the appropriate steps to take. If the Fire Department does not allow you to reenter the building, use a cell phone, pay phone or a neighboring business phone to contact your manager or the owner.

Remember, when the Fire Department arrives, they are in charge. Please give them your full cooperation and do exactly as they instruct.

***Call the Board of Health to talk about smoke and/or water damage.

**** If a fire extinguisher has been used, by you or the Fire Department, contact the Board of Health. The establishment will have to be cleaned of the chemicals and any food contaminated by the extinguisher's chemicals will have to be discarded. To contact the Board of Health call 781-293-6768. If no one answers, leave a message and then call the dispatcher at the Police station at 781-293-5761.

Is Food Safe after Going through a Fire?

- ❖ Food in cans or jars may appear to be okay, but if they've been close to the heat of a fire, they may no longer be edible because heat from a fire can activate food spoilage bacteria. If the heat is extreme, the cans or jars themselves can split or rupture, rendering the food unsafe.
- ❖ Toxic fumes can also contaminate food. Any type of food stored in permeable packaging--cardboard, plastic wrap, etc.- -should be thrown away. Toxic fumes can permeate the packaging and contaminate the food. Discard any raw foods stored outside the refrigerator, such as potatoes or fruit, that could be contaminated by fumes. Food stored in refrigerators or freezers can also become contaminated by fumes. The refrigerator seal isn't airtight and fumes can get inside. If your food has an off-flavor or odor when it's prepared, throw it away.
- ❖ Chemicals used to fight fires contain toxic materials and can contaminate food and cookware. The chemicals cannot be washed off the food. Foods that are exposed to chemicals should be thrown away. This includes food stored in permeable containers like cardboard and screw-topped jars and bottles. Canned goods and cookware exposed to chemicals can be decontaminated.

In Case of Septic Back-up

- ✓ Turn off all running water.
- ✓ Call the Board of Health immediately at 781 293 6768. If no one answers, leave a message and then call the dispatcher at the Police station 781-293-5761. Tell them of the problem and request they contact the health agent.
- ✓ Call your Manager:

- ✓ Call the Landlord:

- ✓ **Discontinue all operations. Close the doors to the public and place a sign “Temporarily closed for repairs”.**

Sewage contains viruses and bacteria that are harmful to your health. It is important that you protect yourself by avoiding contact with it. If there has been any contact, even with your shoes, it is necessary to avoid spreading this to the public. Wear gloves when cleaning and sanitizing of all surfaces. Wash your hands thoroughly after changing shoes and clothes.

There are companies that specialize in this kind of cleanup. Their assistance may be needed. Ask the Board of Health for some suggestions.

Wait for further instruction.

Keeping Food Safe During an Emergency

Did you know that a flood, fire, natural disaster, or the loss of power from high winds, snow, or ice could jeopardize the safety of your food? Knowing how to determine if food is safe and how to keep food safe will help minimize the potential loss of food and reduce the risk of foodborne illness. This fact sheet will help you help protect your business and customers during an emergency and can apply to home situations as well.

ABCD's of Keeping Food Safe in an Emergency

Always keep meat, poultry, fish and eggs refrigerated at or below 41°F and frozen food at or below 0°F. This may be difficult when the power is out.

Kep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to maintain the cold temperature. The refrigerator will keep food safely cold for about 4 hours **if** it is unopened. A full freezer will hold the temperature for approximately 48 hours (24 hours **if** it is half full) if the door remains closed. Obtain dry or block ice to keep your refrigerator as cold as possible if the power is going to be out for a prolonged period of time. Fifty pounds of dry ice should hold an 18-cubic foot full freezer for 2 days. Plan ahead and know where dry ice and block ice can be purchased. Be sure to follow all safety precautions when handling dry ice, it can cause burns or explosions if not handled correctly.

Be prepared for an emergency by having items on hand that don't require refrigeration and can be eaten cold or heated on the outdoor grill. Shelf-stable food, boxed or canned milk, water and canned goods should be part of a planned emergency food supply. Remember to use these items and replace them from time to time. Be sure to keep a hand-held can opener for an emergency.

Consider what you can do ahead of time to store your food safely in an emergency. If you are located in an area that could be affected by a flood, plan your food storage on shelves that will be safely out of the way of contaminated water. Coolers are a great help for keeping food cold if the power will be out for more than 4 hours – have a couple on hand along with frozen gel packs. When your freezer is not full, keep items close together – this helps the food stay cold longer.

Digital, dial or instant-read thermometers and appliance thermometers will help you know if the food is at safe temperatures. Keep appliance thermometers in the refrigerator and freezer at all times. When the power is out, an appliance thermometer will always indicate the temperature in the refrigerator and freezer no matter how long the power has been out. The refrigerator temperature should be 41°F or below; the freezer should be at 0°F or lower. If you're not sure a particular food is cold enough, take its temperature with a food thermometer.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q. Flood waters covered out food stored on shelves and in cabinets. What can I keep and what should I throw out? How should I clean my dishes and pots and pans?

A. Discard all food that came in contact with flood water **including canned goods**. It is impossible to know if containers were damaged and the seal compromised.

Discard wooden cutting boards, plastic or wooden utensils, baby bottle nipples, and pacifiers. There is no way to safely clean them if they have come in contact with contaminated flood waters. Thoroughly wash metal pans, ceramic dishes, and utensils with hot soapy water and sanitize by boiling them in clean water or by immersing them for 15 minutes in a solution of 1 teaspoon of chlorine bleach per quart of water.

Q. My business was flooded and I am worried about the safety of the drinking water. What should I do?

A. Drink and/or serve only approved or chlorinated water. Consider all water from wells, cisterns, and other delivery systems in the disaster area unsafe until tested. Purchase bottled water, if necessary, until you are certain that your water supply is safe. Keep a 3-day supply of water or a minimum of 3 gallons of water per person.

Q. We had a fire in our business, what food we can keep and what should we throw away?

A. Discard food that has been near a fire. Food exposed to fire can be damaged by the heat of the fire, smoke fumes, and chemicals used to fight the fire. Food in cans or jars may appear to be okay, but the heat from a fire can activate food spoilage bacteria. If the heat is extreme, the cans or jars themselves can split or rupture, rendering the food unsafe.

One of the most dangerous elements of a fire is sometimes not the fire itself, but toxic fumes released from burning materials. Discard any raw food or food in permeable packaging – cardboard, plastic wrap, screw-topped jars, bottles, etc. – stored outside the refrigerator. Food stored in refrigerators or freezers can also become contaminated by fumes. The refrigerator seal isn't airtight and fumes can get inside. Chemicals used to fight the fire contain toxic materials and can contaminate food and cookware. Food that is exposed to chemicals should be thrown away – the chemicals cannot be washed off the food. This includes food stored at room temperature, such as fruits and vegetables, as well as food stored in permeable containers like cardboard and screw-topped jars and bottles. Cookware exposed to fire-fighting chemicals can be decontaminated by washing in soap and hot water. Then submerge for 15 minutes in a solution of 1 teaspoon chlorine bleach per quart of water.

Q. A Snowstorm knocked down the power line, can I put the food from the refrigerator and freezer out in the snow?

A. No, frozen food can thaw if it is exposed to the sun's rays even when the temperature is very cold. Refrigerator food may become too warm and food borne bacteria could grow. The

outside temperature could vary hour by hour and the temperature outside will not protect refrigerated and frozen food. Additionally, perishable items could be exposed to unsanitary conditions or to animals. Animals may harbor bacteria or disease; never consume food that has come in contact with an animal. Rather than putting the food outside, consider taking advantage of the cold temperatures by making ice. Fill buckets, empty milk cartons or cans with water and leave them outside to freeze. Then put the homemade ice in your refrigerator, freezer or coolers, enclosed in the containers. Do not allow the food to come in contact with this ice.

Q. Some of my food in the freezer started to thaw or had thawed when the power came back on. Is the food safe? How long will the food in the refrigerator be safe with the power off?

A. Never taste food to determine its safety! You will have to evaluate each item separately. If an appliance thermometer was kept in the freezer, read the temperature when the power comes back on. If the appliance thermometer stored in the freezer reads 41°F or below, the food is safe and may be refrozen. If a thermometer has not been kept in the freezer, check each package of food to determine the safety. Remember you can't rely on appearance or odor. It is safe to refreeze food if the food still contains ice crystals, or is 41°F or below. Refrigerated food should be safe as long as power is out no more than 4 hours. Keep the door closed as much as possible. Discard any perishable foods (such as meat, poultry, fish eggs, and leftovers) that have been above 41°F for 2 hours.

Q. May I refreeze the food in the freezer if it thawed or partially thawed?

A. Yes, the food may be safely refrozen if the food still contains ice crystals or is at 41°F or below. You will have to evaluate each item separately. Be sure to discard any items in either the freezer or the refrigerator that have come in contact with raw meat juices. The Freezer will need cleaning and sanitizing if foods have defrosted. Partial thawing and refreezing may reduce the quality of some food, but the food will remain safe to eat.

Signed by:

John Delano, Chairperson

John Weber, Co-Chair

Jeffrey Anderson, Clerk