

Food for Thought.....

A Newsletter for our Foodservice Establishments

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In This Issue:

Emergency Situations and How to Handle Them

Rob Stauffer, R.E.H.S.
Environmental Health Coordinator

Fire, Flood, Vomit and Stool Emergency Clean up

Rob Stauffer, R.E.H.S.
Environmental Health Coordinator

Action Plan for Sewage Backup

Joe Frazier, R.E.H.S.
Environmental Health Sanitarian

Interruption of Water Services

David Wagoner
Environmental Health Sanitarian

Contaminated Water Supply

Paul Andriacchi, R.E.H.S.
Environmental Health Sanitarian

No Power

Carrie Southern, R.S.
Environmental Health Sanitarian

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Food For Thought,
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BRANCH-HILLSDALE-ST. JOSEPH
COMMUNITY HEALTH AGENCY

Emergency Situations and How to Handle Them

The food licensing year of 2013-2014 was an interesting year. During the past year, food service facilities experienced devastating emergencies ranging from power outages, fires, and frozen water mains, as well as other unpleasant surprises. Given this past year's events, we have selected as our newsletter's focus "**Emergency Situations and How To Handle Them.**"

Back in 2004, emergency manuals were provided to all the food service establishments throughout the State of Michigan. This spiral banded, red, yellow and black colored manual titled "**Emergency Action Plans for Retail Food Establishments**" was produced by the following agencies: Detroit Dept. of Health and Wellness Promotion, Macomb Co. Health Dept., MI Dept. of Agriculture, MI Restaurant Association and Oakland Co. Health Dept. This manual provides guidance on how to respond to the following emergencies:

- Electrical Service Interruption
- Water Service Interruption
- Contaminated Water Supply
- Sewage Back-Up
- Fire
- Flood
- Vomit and Stool Cleanup

Contained in this newsletter are informational articles on different emergency situations. We hope that you find this newsletter informative and educational. If you can not locate your emergency manual, you may download the document from the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development website at the following link:

[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/
MDA_EmergencyActionPlan_109428_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/MDA_EmergencyActionPlan_109428_7.pdf)

Knowing what to do during an emergency and communicating with our office and other regulatory authorities, such as local Fire or Building Departments, will resolve safety concerns, aid in quick recovery and expedite the reopening of your business. If you have any questions regarding emergency situations or food safety concerns, our staff is always more than willing to help in any way we can. Emergencies happen. Be prepared and educated on how to handle them when they happen to you.

Sincerely,
Rob Stauffer, R.E.H.S.
Environmental Health Coordinator
(517) 279-9561 ext. 109
staufferr@bhsj.org

Fire Emergency Action Plan

Fires can be devastating and deadly. It only takes a few minutes for a small fire to become a total loss for a business. No matter how small, any fire must be reported to the Building, Fire and Health Departments. All emergencies require an Assessment, Response, and Recovery. After the fire is extinguished, the facility must be assessed for damage. The Building Department must be contacted to perform an inspection of the building to determine if it is safe to occupy. Power and gas are always shut down during a fire for the safety of the first responders and these utilities may be down for an extended period of time. Foods exposed to unsafe temperatures, smoke, and/or water damage must be thrown away and disposed of in a landfill. Keep an inventory of all items discarded. Contacting the proper authorities will help expedite the clean-up and recovery process. Refer to the emergency manual to learn about the assessment, response, and recovery procedures involved when a fire occurs.

Flood Emergency Action Plan

Flooding can affect any business. Flooding may be confined to an individual business - due to water lines bursting; or may involve entire municipalities due to extreme weather-related events. Assessment, Response and Recovery actions apply to flood emergencies as well. You must voluntarily close your business and immediately contact the appropriate authorities, including the Building and Health Department so that damages can be assessed and the response and recovery plans can begin. Floods from surface waters carry and transport sewage and other harmful pathogenic bacteria and viruses. Pathogenic diseases are easily spread during flooding events. Because of this, employees, as well as all responders, must take appropriate precautions to protect themselves. Personal protection equipment includes the following:

- eye protection
- rubber boots that can be cleaned and sanitized
- protective clothing

Personal hygienic practices, such as hand washing and showering after exposure to contaminated sources are extremely important. Preventing contamination of equipment and supplies from flood waters is also important. Food and single serve items must be destroyed. Refer to your emergency manual for further information and clarification on how to handle a flood emergency.

Vomit and Stool Cleanup Emergency Action Plan

If you have children or pets, you've probably experienced an emergency involving vomit or stool clean up at home. However, when these situations occur in public settings like restaurants, schools, theatres, stadiums, or any other large gathering venue, the likelihood of the illness spreading greatly increases. Norovirus and other forms of gastro-intestinal illnesses are very contagious and easily spread by aerosolized vomit and/or diarrhea exposure. Outbreaks aboard cruise ships have impacted many passengers by the spread of these pathogenic viruses. Your priority as an owner or operator of a restaurant or other business venue is the safety of your guests and employees. This type of contamination can be cleaned and disinfected only if you follow the guidelines as discussed in the emergency manual. Personal protection equipment is a priority when cleaning up contaminated sources. Norovirus, and other viruses like it, are very strong and can survive many types of chemical cleaning agents. Cleaning and sanitizing with high heat or steam and strong solutions of chlorine bleach are effective at destroying these pathogens and preventing further spread of the illness. However, you must follow the recommended guidelines in the emergency manual thoroughly and completely when attempting to clean a vomit or stool contamination. Refer to your emergency manual document or download the available document from the following site:

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/MDA_EmergencyActionPlan_109428_7.pdf

Employees who report to you that they are ill with Norovirus must be excluded completely from work and be free of symptoms for at least 48 hours before returning to work. If the employee was tested and confirmed positive,

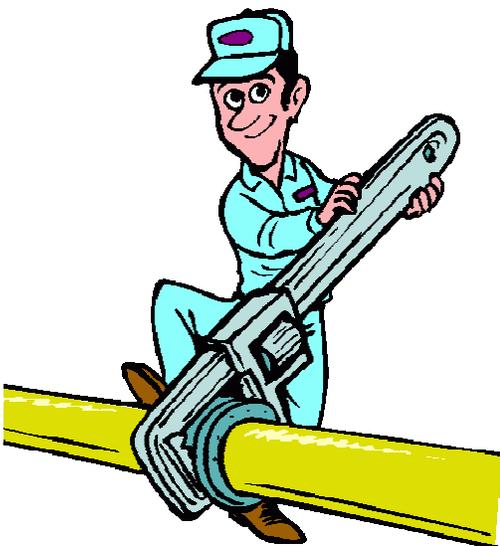
they are still shedding the organism for up to 14 days after relief from the symptoms. It is important that those infected employees practice proper hygiene protocols daily, and especially in the weeks after the illness occurred. Norovirus is a reportable illness to the Health Department and one of the Big Five Illnesses that you must screen food staff for when you employ them.

Action Plan for Sewage Back Up—Joe Frazier, R.E.H.S.

Before sewage backs up into a food establishment, staff needs to have the proper education and training to handle the situation safely. While these circumstances don't happen often, it is important to train staff so that, in case of an emergency, proper procedures are in the forefront of their minds. The correct procedures can be found in the Emergency Action Plan Manual. As environmental health sanitarians, we cannot stress enough, the importance of communication with local health officials in situations like these.

You are responsible for ensuring the safety of your customers as well as that of your employees. When dealing with sewage backups in the restrooms, hand sinks, dish washing sinks and mop sinks, there are a few different alternatives that the manager can employ to keep everyone safe. In extreme situations the only alternative is to close the establishment until repairs can be made, cleanup is verified by the Health Department and re-opening approval is granted by them.

In the instance where drain lines have become plugged, common sense approaches can be taken. Staff shall discontinue the use of the hand sinks, mop sinks or dish washing sinks as well as nearby equipment. Temporary use of chemically treated wet-knap towelettes for hand



washing provided no bare-handed contact with food will occur is approved in situations like these. Alternatively, hot water can be placed into insulated coolers with spigots allowing staff to use hand soap and flowing water

from the cooler to effectively wash their hands. Refrigeration should be used for the thawing of foods or as part of the cooking process instead of thawing in the sink with hot water. Modifying the menu for a short time to remove those items requiring thawing is also an option.



Examples of food items that need to be discarded if they have come in contact with sewage are: food or single service items, crown-capped bottles, cans that are either dented or bulging and food in glass jars. Large volumes of discarded food should be placed into covered refuse containers where it can be removed as soon as possible by a refuse disposal company. You should keep detailed records of all food items or equipment discarded in the incident.

In many cases, you can quickly contact a local plumbing contractor to make necessary repairs. Licensed sewage pumpers are available to pump septic tanks and safely dispose of the waste. If further damage to the system has occurred, you may be required to contact a septic system installer to arrange for repairs. Protective clothing should be worn during the cleaning phase and can include the following: eye protection, rubber boots (that can be washed and sanitized) and work clothing. Proper hygienic practices need to be implemented to limit the spread of harmful pathogens. A proper sanitizing solution can be achieved by using eight ounces of chlorine to five gallons of water to attain 500 parts per million sanitizing solution.

Contact the local health department, we are an integral part of your team. Open communication between your facility and the health department will go a long way in ensuring a smooth transition so you can get up and running quickly.

Contaminated Water Supply – Paul Andriacchi, R.E.H.S. Sanitarian

As a food service operator, it's extremely important to know what actions to take should your water supply become contaminated. This applies whether your water comes from a municipality or an on-site supply. In the case of a municipal supply, a **Boil Water Advisory** is issued by the municipality/supplier. The advisory informs local residents when the water supply has exceeded the maximum contaminate level for coliform bacteria. There are various reasons that this may occur including a broken water main or a problem with



the disinfection process. If an advisory is in effect for your water supply you must close the establishment immediately and contact the Health Department.

Food establishments that utilize a Type II or Type III water supply (privately owned well), follow the disinfection and sampling requirements of the Safe Drinking Water Act. Contact your local health department for specific instructions.

Appropriate response to a contaminated water supply problem is crucial to ensuring compliance with food safety requirements. The "Emergency Action Plan" manual that is mentioned in the introduction of this newsletter has very specific guidelines that must be followed during a **Boil Water Advisory**. These guidelines are provided to walk you through the steps necessary to bring your water system back into compliance after an event. Please remember that the Health Department staff is available to answer any questions you may have if you encounter an emergency situation.

No Power - Carrie Southern, R.S., Sanitarian

Interruption of electrical service is an imminent health hazard for food service establishments. An individual establishment that loses electrical service must notify the regulatory authority at the onset of the interruption and implement the Emergency Action Plan (EAP). After two hours, the Food Service Establishment (FSE) must close and notify the regulatory authority.

The EAP for a FSE must start with an assessment of the electrical interruption. The food service manager or the person in charge is responsible for conducting the initial and ongoing assessments to ensure compliance with food safety requirements. There are multiple factors to consider:

- Complexity and scope of the food operation
- Duration of the emergency event
- Impact on other services (water, human health, etc.)
- Availability of alternate procedures that can be implemented to meet Food Code and Food Law requirements

The biggest loss to a FSE is the food. Therefore, the refrigeration equipment must be monitored. The temperature must be recorded every two hours. When the power is restored, the following table should be used as a guide for handling Potentially Hazardous Food (PHF).

When in doubt, throw it out!

Frozen food remaining solid or semi-solid can be re-frozen if the food package shows no evidence of thawing (i.e., weeping, stains, physical depreciation, container damage and evaporation). Some key things to consider before reopening the FSE include the following:

- Electricity has been fully restored
- All circuit breakers have been properly reset as needed
- All equipment and facilities are operating properly (i.e., refrigerator, freezer, hot water heater, etc.)
- Food contact surfaces, equipment and utensils are clean and sanitized prior to resuming food handling operation.

Cold Food Temperature Guidance

Time	42 - 45° F	46 - 50° F	50° F or above
0-2 (hours)	PHF can be sold	Immediately cool PHF to 41° F or below within 2 hours	PHF cannot be sold Destroy the Food
2-3 (hours)	PHF can be sold, but must be cooled to 41° F or below within 2 hours	Immediately cool PHF to 41° F or below within 1 hour	
4 (hours)	Immediately cool PHF to 41° F or below within 1 hour	PHF cannot be sold Destroy the Food	
5+ (hours)	PHF cannot be sold Destroy the Food		

Branch—Hillsdale—St. Joseph Counties



BRANCH COUNTY

Bronson

Anderson Elementary
Ryan Elementary School

Coldwater

Mancino's Pizza
Legg Middle School
Lakeland Elementary
Jefferson Elementary School

Elk's Lodge

American Legion Post #52

Arby's

Pizza Hut

Pansophia Academy

St. Charles School

Taco Bell #4029

CAASCM

Community Health Center of
Branch County

Max Larsen Elementary
School

Subway # 19719

Northwood's Coffee

Company

Roger the Chef/Wal-Mart

Distribution Center

Great Lakes Health and

Fitness

Biggby Coffee

Quincy

Jennings Elementary School

Quincy Diner

Quincy Dairy Queen

Union City

Union City Middle School

Union City Elementary

School

HILLSDALE COUNTY

Camden

Camden Café

Camden-Frontier School

The Clubhouse

Hillsdale

Bailey School

Coffee Cup Diner

Community Action Agency

Davis Elementary School

Day's Inn

Domino's

Gier Elementary

Hillsdale Alternative High
School

Hillsdale Community Health
Center

Hillsdale Filling Station

Hillsdale High School

King Me Coffee

Loyal Order of Moose

Premiere Theatre

The Finish Line

The Salvation Army

The Vanity Car Wash

Wendy's

Jonesville

Jonesville High School

Jonesville Middle School

Subway

The Cedar's

The Udder Side

Litchfield

Litchfield School

Luigi's Pizza

North Adams

North Adams School

Pittsford

D & S Lounge

DJ's Family Restaurant

Pittsford School

Reading

American Legion Post #360

Kimball Camp YMCA

Ray's Tavern

Reading High School

Somerset

Freddie's Freeze

'Lil Peppi's Pizza

ST. JOSEPH COUNTY

Burr Oak

Burr Oak School

Mama Mia's Pizza

Centreville

Centreville Elementary

Centreville High School

Colon

Colon High School

Constantine

Constantine Middle School

Eastside Elementary

Harvey's House

Piper's Grinders Galore

Riverside Elementary

Sturgis

American Legion Post #73

Congress School

Eastwood Elementary

Green Valley Snack Bar

Jerolene Elementary

Jimi Jo's Ice Cream

Mike's Pizza-Subs

Piper's Pizza Galore

Salvation Army

Sturgis Middle School

Subway at Wal-Mart

Wall School

Wenzel School

Three Rivers

Andrews Elementary

CAASCM Head Start

Norton Elementary

Park Elementary

Three Rivers High School

Three Rivers Middle School

Twin Co. Probation Center

White Pigeon

Central Elementary School

White Pigeon High School