



Guidelines for Food Establishments to Safely Reopen after a Power Outage

Food establishments are reminded that they must report extended power outages to their local health department. An extended power outage is one that lasts for four hours or longer and puts the establishment's ability to operate in accordance with the Food Code, Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, and Connecticut General Statutes at risk, especially with regard to keeping certain foods at the required safe internal temperatures of 135°F or above or 41°F or below. Other concerns include the ability to wash, rinse, and sanitize food contact equipment and surfaces, availability of approved water, whether equipment to prepare food is working properly, adequate lighting, etc. Local health departments will likely inspect the food establishment before allowing it to reopen and operate.

When there is a power outage, the food establishment should follow the rules set by the local health department, which will likely include closing until approved to reopen. Typically, the requirements will include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Report the power outage at your establishment to the local health department.
- Know the time the outage happened and how long the establishment was without power.
- Monitor the temperatures of refrigerated and/or frozen food products in the establishment.
- Know whether or not perishable food items have been in the danger zone (above 41°F or below 135°F) for more than 2 hours.
Voluntarily destroy perishable food products that have been in the danger zone for more than 2 hours.
- Do not use/serve foods that have been in the danger zone for more than 2 hours even if you cook or reheat them.
- Wash, rinse and sanitize all food contact surfaces that came in contact with any unsafe foods (foods that were in the danger zone for 2 hours or more).
- DO NOT connect portable generators to equipment or begin using an alternate water source before getting approval from the local health department.
- Purchase fresh food only after power has been restored **AND** equipment has returned to proper temperatures. Have invoices for new stock available for review by the local health department.
- Know if the establishment's water supply was compromised by the outage and follow local and state health department guidance.
- Check that all equipment used for cooking and holding hot foods is working properly before beginning to prepare food again.

Remember:

**Improper holding and cooking temperatures
are the most common causes of foodborne illness!**

**Follow the guidance from your local health department
to keep your customers and employees safe.**