

General Water Outages Affecting Food Service Operations

- I. The Code allows alternative means for potable water when a temporary interruption in normal public water service takes place. Water outages longer than one (1) day may be considered emergency circumstances according to the population being served. Emergency/Critical circumstances may require efforts and procedures not outlined in this guideline.
- II. WVU Environmental Health and Safety (304-293-3792) AND the local Health Department (Monongalia County: 304-598-5100) having jurisdiction over the food service operation MUST be contacted whenever a water outage occurs.
- III. Temporary water supplies must still be safe and sanitary for human consumption.
- IV. The food service operation MUST be scaled back to a level commensurate with the amount of sanitary water that is available. This must be based upon the professional judgment of management staff that are knowledgeable of the sanitation needs and requirements of their particular operation.
- V. If food preparation is underway when the water outage occurs, processes can continue for up to two hours as long as personal hygiene and hand washing doesn't become impaired to the point of potentially compromising the safety of food being processed. Single use gloves may provide some relief if they are used in a sanitary manner by food workers. An example of impairment within two hours would be a food worker leaving work to use the toilet while water was not available for hand washing before they returned to work. This person would then be unable to handle food or equipment even with gloves until they can have access to a working hand washing station.
- VI. A temporary working hand washing station must consist of:
 - a. Tempered water (approximately 100 degrees F) provided from a sanitary dispensing unit, such as a Cambro hot/cold beverage dispenser, and a waste water collection system for sanitary collection and disposal of waste water.
 - b. Soap, preferably liquid soap from a sanitary pump dispenser.
 - c. Paper towels dispensed in a sanitary manner and a receptacle for towel waste.
- VII. If a water outage extends beyond two hours and no sanitary water is available for hygienic needs then food production must be scaled back to foods requiring minimal on-site preparation and handling, with no bare hand contact of foods or dispensing utensils. If a temporary sanitary water supply is provided for hygienic and sanitation needs then food preparation can be continued for ready to eat foods or raw foods requiring no bare hand contact and that do not require extensive cleanup.

- VIII. Food serving can be provided and undertaken as long as an adequate supply of sanitary water is provided for the personal hygiene of food service workers and customers. The larger the event the more difficult this will be to maintain for long periods, so plans should be implemented quickly for responding to the increased demands or for moving operations to functioning facilities.
- IX. Utensils and equipment that need to be washed in three compartment sinks and by mechanical dishwashers must be transported to locations that are fully operational and supplied with water under pressure. If water service is restored and equipment can be properly cleaned within 24 hours soiled utensils and equipment can remain on-site. Otherwise soiled utensils and equipment must be transported to an approved off-site location for cleaning each day of an extended outage.