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Guidelines for Foodservice Establishments to Safely Reopen after a Power Outage

Foodservice establishments are reminded that they must report extended power outages to the Health Inspection Program. An extended power outage is one that lasts for two hours or longer and puts the establishment’s ability to operate in accordance with the Maine Food Code at risk, especially with regard to keeping possible unsafe foods at 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.

When there is a power outage, the foodservice establishment should follow the rules set by the Health Inspection Program, 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 Health Inspection Program.
- 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.
- Follow the temperature guidelines below.

Cold Foods Internal Temperature Guidance			
Time	42F-45F	46F-50F	51F or above
0-2 hrs	PHF (TCS) can be sold	Immediately cool PHF (TCS) foods to 41F or below within 2 hours	PHF (TCS) foods cannot be sold. Destroy the food.
2-3 hrs	PHF (TCS) can be sold but must be cooled to 41F or below within 2 hours	Immediately cool PHF (TCS) to 41F or below within 1 hr	
4 hrs	Immediately cool PHF (TCS) to 41F or below within 1 hr	PHF (TCS) foods cannot be sold. Destroy the food	
5+ hrs	PHF (TCS) foods cannot be sold. Destroy the food		

- 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).
- 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 Health Inspection Program.

- Know if the establishment's water supply was compromised by the outage and follow Maine CDC's Drinking Water Program 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 the Health Inspection Program to keep your customers and employees safe.