



**Consumer Protection Division  
Policy, Standards, And Quality Assurance Section  
Public Sanitation And Retail Food Safety Unit**

**Texas Department of State  
Health Services**

## **Reopening a Retail Establishment after an Emergency**

The objective of food safety is to reduce the risk of foodborne illness by safeguarding food using proper storage, preparation and service. This remains the objective during and after emergencies. This information from the Department of State Health Services will help retail food establishments reopen after an emergency and provide a safe food product.

### **Food Safety with No Power and No Water**

- Evaluate the safety of the remaining food in the establishment.
  - Time / Temperature Control for Safety (TCS) Food that has been out of temperature (above 41°F) for more than 4 hours must be discarded. Check the temperature of the food using a thermometer
  - Packaged non-TCS food, including canned foods, should be discarded if there are signs of water damage if the package seal has been broken.
- Do not reopen the food establishment if water cannot be obtained from approved source (bottled or from a water hauler with covered sanitized container).
- Food preparation surfaces, cooking equipment and utensils must be cleaned with soapy water from a potable water supply and sanitized with a solution of ¼ cup chlorine bleach per gallon of water.
- TCS food may be served if there is equipment to hold food at or below 41°F. An ice chest with a drain is acceptable when ice in the ice chest is from an approved source.
- Use only disposable paper products (plates, cups) and plastic single service eating utensils.
- Outdoor cooking on a grill, barbeque pit, etc. is allowed if there is overhead protection and the equipment is placed on a hard surface such as asphalt or concrete. No dirt or gravel surface.
- All food must be cooked and served with no holding.
- Create a temporary handwash facility using a water cooler with a spigot and a catch basin. Water used to fill the cooler must be from an approved source. Soap and water must be available.
  - When a handwash facility cannot be created use chemically treated towelettes (baby wipes).
  - Single-use gloves may be used along with handwashing.

### **Food Safety with Water and No Power**

- Evaluate the safety of the remaining food in the establishment.
  - Time / Temperature Control for Safety (TCS) Food that has been out of temperature (above 41°F) for more than 4 hours must be discarded. Using a thermometer, check the temperature of the food.
  - Packaged non-TCS food, including canned foods, should be discarded if there are no signs of water damage of if the package seal has been broken.
- The water must be assumed to be unsafe, unless the approved water system official has stated that the water is safe to drink.

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- The water should be purified by:
  - Boiling the water vigorously (rolling boil) for one to three minutes continuously; or
  - Adding eight drops (1/8 teaspoon) unscented bleach per gallon of water. The water should be stirred and allowed to stand for 30 minutes.
- Food preparation surfaces, cooking equipment and utensils must be cleaned with soapy water and sanitized with a solution of ¼ cup chlorine bleach per gallon of water.
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  - Packaged non-TCS food, including canned foods, should be discarded if there are signs of water damage or if the package seal has been broken.
- Do not reopen the food establishment if water cannot be obtained from approved source (bottled or from water hauler with covered sanitized container).
- Food preparation surfaces, cooking equipment and utensils must be cleaned with soapy water and sanitized with a solution of ¼ cup chlorine bleach per gallon of water.
- TCS food may be served if the refrigeration equipment can hold food at or below 41°F.
- Use only disposable paper products (plates, cups) and plastic single service eating utensils.
- All food must be cooked and served with no holding.
- Create a temporary handwash facility using a water cooler with a spigot and a catch basin. Water used to fill the cooler must be from an approved source. Soap and water must be available.
  - When a handwash facility cannot be created use chemically treated towelettes (baby wipes).
  - Single-use gloves may be used along with handwashing.
- When power is obtained from an individual generator, the generator must be operated outside.
  - The capacity of the generator must be carefully evaluated to determine what equipment can be safely operated.

**Additional questions or concerns can be directed to the  
Retail Food Safety Group at (512) 834-6753**