

# Regulated Establishment Loss of Power Policy



Craven County Environmental Health  
2818 Neuse Blvd New Bern, NC 28562  
(252) 636-4936

June 2023



# Emergency Action Plan for Interruption of Electrical Services

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Name of Establishment

Initial: \_\_\_\_\_

# Emergency Action Plan for Interruption of Electrical Services

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Establishment

In the event of a power outage or major loss of refrigeration this establishment will follow this emergency action plan as signed below and will provide the Health Department with any and all documentation upon request.

This Emergency Action Plan has been developed for implementation in response to a long-term power outage and/or long-term loss of refrigeration. This plan has been developed in cooperation with the Craven County Health Department and is based on guidance from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services.

The Craven County Health Department encourages the use of alternate power sources to maintain the continued operation of essential equipment. Please notify the Craven County Health Department if you have a generator and specifically what equipment that generator will service.

In the event of an emergency involving electrical service interruption, we agree that an assessment of a number of factors is required. These factors include:

- The complexity and scope of food operations
- The duration of the emergency event
- The impact on other critical infrastructure and services (example: water supply)
- The availability of alternative procedures that can be used to meet Food Code and Food Law requirements.

In the event of a long-term interruption in electrical service one person in charge will be designated to oversee all food safety procedures to ensure that the emergency action plan is followed, and that all documentation is maintained as required by that plan. In the event of a shift change, an alternate person in charge will be appointed. It is the responsibility of the designated person in charge to conduct the initial and the ongoing assessment to ensure the consistent compliance with food safety requirements.

|                                 |             |                                   |       |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|-------|
| Person in Charge:               | _____       | Business Phone<br>Number:         | _____ |
| Business Email<br>Address:      | _____       | Emergency (after<br>hours) Phone: | _____ |
| Establishment has<br>generator: | Yes      No |                                   |       |

In the event of a power outage, I agree to follow the procedures outlined in the attached Emergency Action Plan. If safe operations cannot be assured, we agree to close the food establishment and notify the Craven County Health Department.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Owner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Please fill in the above information, then review and initial each page indicating that you have read and agree with the Emergency Action Plan. Return a copy of the plan including any attachments to the Craven County Health Department and keep your copy of the plan on site in a safe, easily accessible location.**

Initial: \_\_\_\_\_

# Emergency Action Plan for Interruption of Electrical Services

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Establishment

## Interruption of Electrical Service

*For the purpose of defining an imminent health hazard for this document, an extended interruption of electrical service means that the electrical service have been interrupted for **4 hours or more**.*

## Purpose:

The primary purpose of this policy is to serve as guidance for what a food service establishment can expect to be responsible for in the event of a long-term loss of power. This policy also provide guidelines for Environmental Health Specialists in the field for assessing food supplies after a loss of power. This policy will help ensure consistency in evaluating these situations and ultimately protect public health.

## Disclaimer:

This guide and its tools, tables or charts are not binding requirements. The information provided herein is based on professional experience and practical considerations. Compliance and enforcement will remain within the interpretations and decisions of state, local and tribal authorities.

## Applicable Laws and Rules:

The following policies are based on:

- The legal authority granted to the local Health Authority under G.S. 130A-247 thru 130A-250 to inspect and regulate Food and Lodging establishments.
- Section 15A NCAC 18A .2600 (Rules Governing the Sanitation of Food Service Establishments) serve as a basis for all activities to the regulation of food handling establishments within Craven County.
- State-issued guidance and protocols are used in the application of the rules and statutes. Copies of statute, rules, guidelines and protocols are located in the Environmental Health Division of the Craven County Health Department, 2818 Neuse Blvd, New Bern, NC 28562.

## Plan Ahead:

Power outages are the most frequent type of manmade disaster. Statistics indicate that the average power outage lasts four hours but could last for days. After Hurricane Florence in 2018, power was out for days to weeks depending on the area.

- Consider access to an electrical generator to be used in emergencies. Make certain that the generator has the capacity to operate critical pieces of equipment such as refrigeration and freezer units, pumps, safety lighting, hot water heaters, etc. Make certain that individuals are

Initial: \_\_\_\_\_

# Emergency Action Plan for Interruption of Electrical Services

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Establishment

trained to operate the equipment safely. Advise the utility company that you are using a generator as a safety precaution for their employees.

- Consider securing access to a refrigerated truck that can be delivered to the site during an emergency.
- Consider securing access to a refrigerated warehouse that has a back-up generator to which you can bring food needing refrigeration in insulated containers.
- Prepare an “emergency menu” in advance including recipes for food items that do not require cooking since the ventilation system will no longer remove smoke, steam, grease laden air, etc.
- Develop a plan for minimizing loss of food product held under refrigeration. Opening refrigeration equipment doors will cause the food to warm more quickly. What is your strategy for loss prevention?
- If you plan to use ice to keep food cold, where will you obtain ice when ice is in high demand by the general population?
- Dry ice should not be used in enclosed spaces (i.e. walk -in coolers) because the potential build-up of carbon dioxide.
- Heating, air conditioning, security systems, computers, registers, lighting, and other systems may not operate. Develop a plan for coping with these problems.
- Maintain contact information for people that can help you such as the utility company, garbage hauling service, ice supplier, refrigerated truck company, food warehouse, septic tank pumping service, local health department, emergency broadcast station frequency numbers, etc.
- Develop a list of equipment that uses electricity in your establishment and develop a contingency plan that describes what you would do if electrical services were interrupted.
- Use the Emergency Action Plans as a guide to help describe the steps that you would take in your own establishment.
- Develop a plan for communicating with key people in your organization. Keep a list of emergency contact numbers with you at all times.
- Plan how important documents and other information will be documented, and other information will be communicated without the use of computers and fax machines.

Initial: \_\_\_\_\_

# Emergency Action Plan for Interruption of Electrical Services

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Establishment

***In the event of a power outage the following should be included in the Establishment's Emergency Action Plan:***

## **The person-in-charge will:**

1. Note the date and time of the interruption in electrical service.
2. Assess the affected operations and either close the establishment or continue operating using modified procedures. Either option will follow this establishment's Emergency Action Plan.
3. Immediately notify the Craven County Health Department, with the following information
  - a. Whether the establishment is open for service or not
  - b. If closed, when did the operation close in relation to the power outage.
4. In a widespread event when contact with the regulatory agency is not possible, the establishment will properly document 1-3 above to report to the Health Department at a later time.
5. Oversee the proper monitoring and recording of temperatures for all TCS food being held in refrigeration, freezers, and hot holding units.

## **ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES DURING AN INTERRUPTION IN ELECTRICAL SERVICE:**

The following are temporary alternative procedures that will be taken to address specific affected food operations during an extended interruption of electrical service.

## **SECTION I: COOKING AND HOLDING OF FOOD AT PROPER TEMPERATURE. THIS SECTION MUST BE FOLLOWED WHETHER THE ESTABLISHMENT REMAINS OPEN OR IS CLOSED DURING THE POWER OUTAGE:**

### **Refrigeration**

*The lack of adequate refrigeration may result in the growth of pathogenic or disease-causing organisms and toxins in food that require temperature control for safety (Potentially Hazardous Foods).*

- Food temperatures will be monitored and recorded a minimum of every 2 hours. Items listed below will aid in keeping refrigeration at proper temperatures.
  - Keep refrigeration equipment doors closed.
  - Pack potentially hazardous food in commercially made ice or dry ice (Dry ice should not be used in enclosed spaces (i.e., walk-in cooler) because of the potential build-up of carbon dioxide.)
  - Do not put hot food in refrigeration equipment.
- Any food product that is no longer safe for consumption will be discarded by the person in charge using the guidelines in the following chart, and any discarded food will be documented with name, and approximate amount. Pictures may be used in conjunction with written documentation.

Initial: \_\_\_\_\_

# Emergency Action Plan for Interruption of Electrical Services

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Establishment

- When power is restored, the following table will be used as a guide for handling potentially hazardous food (PHF) stored in refrigeration units that may have lost power.

## When in doubt, throw it out!

| 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                            | Immediately cool PHF food to 41°F or below within 2 hours | Immediately cool PHF food to 41°F or below within 1 hours | PHF cannot be sold. Destroy the food |
| 4                              | Immediately cool PHF food to 41°F or below within 1 hours | PHF cannot be sold. Destroy the food                      |                                      |
| 5+                             | PHF cannot be sold. Destroy the food                      |   |                                      |

### Frozen foods:

- Any foods that have packaging that shows evidence of thawing such as weeping, stains, physical depreciation, evaporation, or container damage will be used immediately or discarded.
- Any food that remain solid or semi-solid will be immediately refrozen.

### Hot Holding:

*Hot holding equipment that is no longer functional may result in unsafe temperatures that allow for the growth of pathogens.*

### Alternative Procedures

- All potentially hazardous food will be discarded after 4 hours from being removed from temperature control (below 135°F).
- An alternate source of heat will be used, and the food temperature will be monitored hourly. SOP's must be provided and approved by local health department.
- If power returns within 4 hours, food will be re-heated to 165°F or above.

### Cooking Equipment:

*Cooking equipment that is no longer functional may result in inadequate cooking processes that permit the survival of growth and pathogens.*

Initial: \_\_\_\_\_

# Emergency Action Plan for Interruption of Electrical Services

---

Name of Establishment \_\_\_\_\_

## Alternative Procedures

- All foods in the middle of the cooking process will be evaluated for time and temperature to determine if foods should be discarded. Any foods that were in the cooking or re-heating process but did not reach the minimum temperature as outlined in the following chart will be discarded.
- Discontinue cooking operations and turn off equipment.

| Food  | Minimum Temperature                     | Minimum Holding Time at the Specified Temperature         |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Unpasteurized Shell Eggs</b><br>Prepared for immediate service<br><b>Commercially Raised Game Animals</b><br><b>Fish, Pork and Meat</b> Not otherwise specified in this chart or in ¶3-401.11(B) | 145°F                                   | 15 Seconds  |
| <b>Unpasteurized Shell Eggs</b> not prepared for immediate service<br><b>Exotic Species of Game Animals</b><br><b>Comminuted Fish and Meats</b><br><b>Injected Meats</b>                            | 158°F<br><b>155°F</b><br>150°F<br>145°F | <1 second<br><b>17 Seconds</b><br>1 minute<br>3 minutes   |
| <b>Poultry</b><br><b>Stuffed Fish; Stuffed Meat; Stuffed Pasta; Stuffed Poultry; Stuffing Containing Fish, Meat, or Poultry</b><br><b>Wild Game Animals</b>   | 165°F                                   | Instantaneous   |
| <b>Food Cooked in a Microwave Oven</b>  | 165°F                                   | And hold for 2 minutes after removing from microwave oven |

2017 Federal Food Code

## SECTION II: THIS SECTION IS TO BE REFERRED TO WHEN AN OPERATION REMAINS OPEN FOR A POWER OUTAGE:

### Menu:

- In the event of a power outage, cooking and hot and cold holding facilities may be extremely limited. Please attach a conceptual plan of what actions will be taken in the event that the food establishment is to remain open during a power outage. For example: list what facilities would and would not be available for the safe preparation of food, what types of menu items may still be safely provided to the public etc.

Initial: \_\_\_\_\_

# Emergency Action Plan for Interruption of Electrical Services

---

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Establishment

## **Ventilation:**

*Inadequate mechanical ventilation may result in a build-up of cooking smoke, heat, steam, grease laden air, etc.*

### Alternative Procedures

- All cooking operations requiring ventilation will be discontinued and all equipment will be shut off.

## **Lighting:**

*The lack of artificial illumination may negatively impact personal safety, food preparation, food handling, cleaning of equipment/utensils, premises, etc.*

### Alternative Procedures

- Limit operation to daylight hours. Restrict operations to those that can be safely conducted in available natural light.
- Provide lighting using other power sources (i.e. battery operated lantern, flashlight etc. if fire codes allow). Limit operation to those procedures that can be safely conducted using alternative lighting.

## **Dishwashing equipment:**

*Equipment for cleaning and sanitizing utensils and tableware that is no longer operational may result in contamination of food contact surfaces.*

### Alternative Procedures

- A three-compartment sink with proper wash, rinse and sanitize procedures will be used if hot water is still available.
- Single service tableware will be used.
- Any operations that generate soiled utensils/tableware will be discontinued.

## **Electric Hot Water Heater:**

*Electric hot water heaters will no longer function resulting in an interruption of hot water for effective ware washing and hand washing.*

### Alternative Procedures

- Heat water on a gas cooking appliance.

Initial: \_\_\_\_\_

# Emergency Action Plan for Interruption of Electrical Services

---

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Establishment

## **Sewage Disposal:**

*Sewage ejector pump(s), and pump chambers that no longer function may result in sewage overflow and backups.*

Alternative Procedures if establishment has been identified as having sewage ejector pump or pump chamber.

- Discontinue all operations. Contact the local health department for possible operations.
- Call a septic hauler for pumping may be necessary to keep up with demand.

Please identify if establishment has:

- A pump chamber
- Sewage ejector pump
- Other septic component that requires electricity

## **SECTION III: RECOVERY (POWER RESTORED)**

***IF THE FOOD ESTABLISHMENT WAS ORDERED OR OTHERWISE REQUIRED TO CEASE OPERATIONS BY THE CRAVEN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT, IT WILL NOT RE-OPEN UNTIL AUTHORIZATION HAS BEEN GRANTED BY THE CRAVEN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT.***

**The following will be considered for returning to normal operation when power is restored:**

- Electricity, potable water, and/or gas services will be assessed to confirm that it has been fully restored.
- All circuit breakers will be properly re-set as needed.
- All equipment and facilities checked to make sure they are operating properly including hot holding, ventilation, water supply, sewage pumps, hot water heaters, toilet facilities, ware washing machines and hand washing facilities.
  - All refrigeration, freezers and hot holding will continue to be monitored until it is confirmed that they are holding proper temperature for at least 2 hours.
- Food contact surfaces, equipment and utensils will be cleaned and sanitized prior to resuming food-handling operations. This includes ice bins in ice machines where ice has melted during the interruption.
- All water lines will be flushed, and filters changed as needed etc.

## **Disposal of Food:**

- Small volumes of food will be denatured (such as with bleach, a detergent or other cleaning product to render it unusable) or alternatively destroyed and placed in an outside refuse bin for removal.
- Any large volumes of food will be kept well marked in an area of refrigeration or freezer completely separated from food not to be discarded until a disposal company can be contacted for immediate transportation to a licensed landfill.

Initial: \_\_\_\_\_