

Guidelines For Reopening of Food Establishments After A Water Emergency

Connecticut Department of Public Health Food Protection Program

A food establishment that was ordered or otherwise required to cease operations may not re-open until the local director of health has granted authorization. Local health departments will conduct follow-up investigations/assessments with food establishments to determine what is required to resume safe operation.

The recommendations provided below are not intended to cover every situation or type of food establishment. Each food establishment must be evaluated regarding areas/equipment that may have been contaminated. Based on the findings of the investigation the local health director will determine if the retail food establishment can safely resume operations or if specific actions are required to further reduce the risk to public health.

The following guidance for reopening establishments is based on the most commonly observed situations and water using equipment in food establishments and should be modified as needed for each establishment.

After the regulatory authority has provided notice that the water supply is safe to use, the operator must verify to the local health department that the following procedures have been completed:

- The water system has been adequately flushed to bring fresh, uncontaminated water into the establishment. This includes, but is not limited to, water fountains, workstations, all sinks, and outside spigots. Time frames for flushing will vary depending on the system. Often, a temperature change will signal that the contaminated water has been significantly replaced with fresh water.
- Once flushed, all equipment with waterline connections must be cleaned and sanitized in accordance with manufacturers instructions, such as
 - Post-mix beverage machines, tonic/seltzer machines, and bar “gun” dispensers
 - Run beverages through each dispensing outlet to flush the system,
 - Sanitize the soda nozzles.
 - Ice machines – remove old ice, clean and sanitize bin
 - Coffee or tea urns
 - Pre-rinse hoses (normally found in the dishwashing area)
 - Fill line for steam kettle
 - Steam cooking equipment and steam tables
 - Dipper well connected to tap water
 - Supply line to soap dispenser on mechanical dishwashing machine
 - Garbage can washer
 - Soap/chemical proportioners
 - In-place spray units and units which periodically spray water on products to maintain freshness (produce misters)
 - Glass washers
 - Water wash system for exhaust hoods above cooking equipment
 - Hot water heater tanks (drain, flush, refill)
 - Faucet screens, water line strainers on mechanical dishwashing machines etc.
 - Hand sinks including those in restrooms for the public
 - Other equipment with water connections
- All other food contact surfaces have been cleaned and sanitized before resuming use including, but not limited to:
 - Sinks, prep counters, cutting boards, interiors of reach in coolers
 - Dishes, multi-use utensils and other cook ware
- Water treatment systems (in some establishments) have been assessed and the manufacturer’s recommended procedures followed for:
 - Disinfecting water softeners, prior to putting them back into service
 - Replacing filters or media in small filters on ice machines, water treatment, systems, beverage vending machines;
 - Replacing carbon filters or carbon media in filters.

Depending on the situation, the director of health may wish to post a sign in establishments to indicate that the health department has determined that the establishment has complied with the pre-opening procedures.

EACH SITUATION/ESTABLISHMENT NEEDS TO BE EVALUATED.

WHAT IS ADEQUATE FOR ONE ESTABLISHMENT MAY NOT BE ADEQUATE FOR OTHERS.