



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE  
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*Commissioner*

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## HURRICANE SANDY - EMERGENCY GUIDELINES FOR OPERATING A FOOD SERVICE ESTABLISHMENT WITHOUT ELECTRICAL SERVICE

While we discourage food service establishments (FSE) from conducting business without electrical power, we realize that many will provide a valuable community service by doing so. Toward that end, the Department wants to work with FSEs that choose to serve the public so that we may minimize public health risks. Please review and follow the following guidelines if you have or intend to re-open your establishment before electrical power is restored:

- Food service establishment operators should first remove all standing water from their facility to ensure safety of employees
- Go through your refrigerator and freezer and discard food that was held above 41 degrees Fahrenheit for more than two hours.
- Operators should not take risks and should dispose of all spoiled or questionable foods –**WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!**
- Food that must be discarded should be denatured and discarded. To avoid an infestation of rodents and other pests, keep discarded food in rodent-proof containers until your licensed carting service is able to pick it up.
- Restaurant operators must wash, rinse, and sanitize all non-food contact and food contact surfaces thoroughly (twice) as flood water and/or sewage may have contaminated these surfaces.
- Food must remain in temperature even though mechanical refrigeration or electric cooking or warming equipment is not available. Keep and store cold food with block ice. We discourage the use of dry ice as it emits toxic

gas when melting. However, if you do use it, it should only be handled with gloves in a well-ventilated space. Similarly, we are discouraging use of gas ranges and ovens without adequate venting. If mechanical ventilation systems are not working, make sure to keep kitchen windows or an exterior door near the gas equipment open.

- Food service should:
  - Only take place during daylight hours until power is restored or battery operated lighting is available
  - Be limited to take-out service to minimize the risks to patrons maneuvering in the dark
  - Be limited to the use of single service items (paper or plastic plates and utensils) until power is restored
- The New York City Fire Department requires that FSEs have an active fire alarm system, lit exit signs and emergency lighting to avoid violations of the New York City Fire Code

We believe that by following these steps you will limit the potential risks associated with restaurant foodborne illness. Additional information can be found at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/ehs/floods-food.shtml> and specific questions will be answered by calling (347) 396-2135, (347) 396-2105, and (347) 396-2133.