

FOOD SAFETY DURING PUBLIC SAFETY POWER SHUTOFF

- RETAIL FOOD FACILITIES -

Food facility operators must take the necessary steps to protect consumers from unsafe food before, during and immediately after public power shutoffs. Sonoma County Environmental Health recommends that food retailers develop a plan and obtain necessary supplies before the need arises.

Food operators should take special care in handling potentially hazardous foods (PHF). PHF are moist, perishable foods in and on which bacteria can grow. PHF require temperature control and must be held at, below 41°F, or above 135°F.

WHEN THERE IS AN OUTAGE

Maintain Cold Potentially Hazardous Foods

- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible
- If practical, group packages of cold food together to reduce heat gain
- Cover open refrigerated and frozen food cases, especially vertical displays
- Use a generator to keep refrigerators and freezers in operation.
- Use dry ice or ice inside of refrigerators or freezers
- Store food in a refrigerated truck
- If available, relocate food to another permitted food facility.
- If necessary, use combination of dry ice and generator to maintain temperature of 41°F

Caution: The use of dry ice may result in unsafe build-up of CO₂ (Carbon Dioxide).

Food taken to a private residence may not be returned to the facility

Hot Potentially Hazardous Foods

- Consider going to a limited menu to effectively maintain proper temperatures
- Maintain hot foods above 135°F

Important Record Keeping

- Note the time at which the power outage begins.
- Use a thermometer to monitor food temperatures and maintain a temperature log.
- Check temperatures every 4 hours

Discontinue Food Preparation If Any of the Following Conditions Exist

- Inability to properly wash, rinse and sanitize utensils
- Inoperative hood ventilation and make-up air supply systems
- Lack of sufficient light in food preparation areas to allow for safe food preparation and cleaning and sanitizing of food contact surfaces.
- No hot water, inadequate water pressure



WHEN POWER IS RESTORED

Prior to resuming food preparation and/or sale of PHF, verify the following:

- Electricity and gas services have been restored
- All circuit breakers have been properly reset as needed
- All equipment and facilities are operating properly, including: Lighting; Refrigeration; Hot Holding; Ventilation; and Toilet Facilities
- Hot (minimum 120^o F, except hand washing 100-108^o F) and cold potable water, under pressure for hand washing and proper dishwashing
- Maintain receipts/invoices of foods purchased after power has been restored

Identify PHF that may have been in the temperature danger zone. Check the internal food temperatures.

PHF that has exceeded 50°F must be discarded.

Disposal of Food

- If it is determined that food must be discarded, document the type and amount of food and the reason for disposal for records purposes.
- Discard small volumes in the appropriate refuse bin.
- To discard large volumes of food, contact your refuse disposal company or your local landfill operator for disposal instructions/expedited service
- Non-PHF foods, such as whole produce, may not need to be discarded
- If there are any questions regarding the safety of specific foods, contact Environmental Health

When In Doubt, Throw It Out!!

QUESTIONS OR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION?

Contact Sonoma County Environmental Health Staff at: (707) 565-6565 DURING NORMAL WORKING HOURS, 8:00 A.M. TO 4:00 P.M., MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY.

Stay informed –

- You can check if your facility is in an area where power may be shut off on the PG&E website: <https://m.pge.com/#high-fire-threat-map>.
- Make sure you can receive updated information from PG&E by updating your contact information at www.pge.com/mywildfirealerts
- Sign up for safety information on Nixle by texting your zip code to 888-777.
- For information on immediate threats to personal safety or property, tailored to an address of your choosing, sign up for SoCo Alerts www.SoCoAlert.com