



Wisconsin Food Code Fact Sheet



INTERRUPTED WATER SUPPLY

Water service may be interrupted due to damaged supply lines, water main breaks, or other factors. The interruption may be short but, in some cases, may continue for multiple days. It may also be localized or widespread. It is recommended that the license holder note the date and time of the event. Brief interruptions that do not impact food safety may not require emergency procedures. When there is an extended timeframe of interrupted water supply, it is recommended that the Person in Charge (PIC) implement emergency procedures. Immediately discontinue operation if a safe operation cannot be maintained or if food safety cannot be assured using an alternative procedure. If there is a significant threat or danger to health, the license holder should immediately discontinue operations and notify the Regulatory Authority.

Public Health Considerations

During an interruption to the water supply, one of the primary concerns is to protect the health of employees and customers. Always consider if there is an imminent health hazard that would not permit a safe operation. Has there been an evacuation order that would require you to close the facility? Can employees safely get to work and, once they arrive, will they be safe in the facility? Are backup or temporary systems available?

Facility Planning Considerations:

- Prepare an “emergency” menu, including recipes for foods that require little or no water.
- List equipment that uses water and develop a response plan for each piece of equipment.
- Determine the amount of water needed to operate equipment, sinks, and the emergency menu.
- Identify alternate water sources in advance.
- Prepare a contact list for alternate water sources, plumbers, contractors, utility companies, etc.
- Maintain an inventory of emergency items such as bottles for hauling/storing water, disposable gloves, hand sanitizer, single-use utensils, etc.
- Develop a contingency plan for toilets.
- If water is supplied using a private well source, consider if well disinfection will be required.

Food Safety Considerations

- No imminent health hazard is present
- PIC can ensure that safe operating conditions exist during the disruption



Approved Alternative Water Source

- Commercial bottled water
- Municipal water available via tanker truck, approved portable water containers, or other sanitary means of transporting water
- Water hauled from an approved public water supply in a covered, food-grade clean, and sanitized container
- Approved water supply from a neighboring location using approved sanitary hoses and fittings
- Fire system water, when approved as potable
- Demonstrate that safe water is available for use as a food ingredient



- Use commercially manufactured ice
- Discontinue use of automated post-mix fountain drink dispensers, auto-fill coffee makers, instant hot water dispensers, juice, and tea



Set Up a Temporary Hand Wash System

- Using potable water
- Supplied with soap and towels
- Provide a bucket to catch the wastewater
- Approved hand antiseptics may be allowed where all food is prepackaged
- An operational hand wash sink must also be available in the restroom area



Operational Toilet Facilities Must be Accessible to Employees for the Facility to Remain Open

- Portable mobile toilet facilities may be used if conveniently located, properly ventilated, maintained, and equipped with handwashing facilities



Dishwashing

- Use single-service utensils
- Use alternative approved water
- Provide appropriate water volume, quantity, and temperature
- Discontinue operations as inventories of clean equipment, utensils, and tableware are exhausted

Facility Recovery Considerations:

- Verify the date and time water was restored.
- Obtain a safe water sample for coliform prior to using private well water.
- Equipment and facilities must be operational.
- Cleaning tools and equipment must be cleaned and sanitized prior to use.
- Flush pipes, faucets, and drinking fountains with cold water for a minimum of five minutes.
- Ice machine must be flushed, cleaned, sanitized, and discard the first three batches of ice.
- Run water softeners through a regeneration cycle.
- Drain reservoirs in tall buildings.
- Change water filter.

Additional Information

[DATCP Food Code Fact Sheets](#)

[Emergency Action Plan for Retail Food Establishments | Conference for Food Protection](#)

[AFDO Food Emergency Regulator Pocket Guide](#)



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