

Guideline on Emergency Action Plans for Food Establishments:

Sewage Backup

A sewage backup refers to the overflow of sewage from equipment or plumbing facilities within a food establishment. A sewage backup would result in closure of a food establishment.

In the event of a health hazard involving a sewage backup at a food service establishment, the following actions MUST be taken:

- **Assess the situation.** Immediately discontinue operation if a safe operation cannot be maintained.
- **Notify the Public Health Inspector** of the health hazard and discuss alternate procedures to be used. Determine if the issue is widespread.

Manitoba Health's Health Protection Unit will promptly respond to single events involving imminent health hazards and provide guidance to help the operator resume operation as quickly as possible.

Follow the Appropriate Emergency Procedures approved by the Public Health Inspector. A food establishment that was ordered or otherwise required to cease operations may not re-open until authorization has been granted by the regulatory authority.

Response to a Sewage Backup

Sewage backups occur when equipment directly connected to plumbing is either slow to drain or does not drain. This may occur in a single or multiple location within the establishment. The following are procedures that can be taken during a sewage backup emergency.

Discontinue operation if:

- The physical facility cannot be maintained in a sanitary manner.
- There is a continuous overflow of sewage into the establishment.

Building Safety

- Remove affected equipment from service and remove the obstruction.
 - Call a service company if the obstruction cannot be easily removed.
- Thoroughly wash, rinse and sanitize all affected areas.
- Keep food traffic away from the affected area.
- Use alternative appliances or fixtures in the establishment.

Alternative Procedures

Hand washing:

- If the hand washing sinks do not drain:
 - Potable water from an approved water supply can be placed in a clean, sanitized container with a spigot to be used for hand washing.
 - Hand washing facilities must be supplied with suitable hand soap, disposable paper towel and a waste receptacle.
 - Use an alcohol based hand sanitizer for cleaning hands only if the food items offered are prepackaged or protected from contamination by hands. Discontinue operation if food items offered are not protected from contamination by hands.
 - If any of these sinks are located in the restroom, discontinue operation.
 - If the above procedures cannot be performed, discontinue operation.

Prep sinks:

- If the culinary sinks used for thawing or cooling food or washing fruits and vegetables do not drain:
 - Thaw food in the refrigerator.
 - Use pre-washed, packaged, frozen or canned produce..
 - Use alternate cooling methods.
 - Modify the menu to avoid procedures requiring the use of the culinary sink.

Dishwashing:

- If the dishwasher, three compartment sink, or pot sink does not drain:
 - Use single-service articles. Discontinue operations when inventories of clean equipment and tableware are exhausted.

Janitorial/utility sink:

- If the janitor/utility sink does not drain:
 - Discontinue use of the sink.
 - Dump mop water into the toilet as a temporary solution.

General Clean Up (ensure personal protective equipment is worn during clean up)

- Remove any standing sewage and wet materials.
- All damaged food equipment, utensils, linens and single service items must be destroyed or properly disposed.
- **Discard:**
 - Any materials that cannot be effectively cleaned and sanitized
 - Any damaged food equipment or utensils
- **Mop heads, other cleaning aids, uniforms:**
 - Launder or discard any items that came in contact with sewage.
- Wash, rinse, sanitize, and air dry affected **walls, equipment surfaces, and utensils.**
- **Flooring**
 - *Carpet:* remove or replace
 - *Other flooring materials:* wash, rinse, sanitize

- ✓ **Wash:** water & detergent
- ✓ **Rinse:** clean water
- ✓ **Sanitize:** 500ppm chlorine solution

Food

Sewage may cause food (even if packaged) to be unsafe to consume. Very few food or beverage items can be salvaged after being exposed to sewage.

- **Alcoholic beverages:** Contact the Liquor and Gaming Authority of Manitoba (LGA) inspector to discuss the destruction of any affected alcoholic beverage products. If items are to be discarded, the cans or bottles may be able to be salvaged for a refund.

The following items should be discarded:

- Exposed food, bulk foods, fresh produce, meat, poultry, fish and eggs
- Any foods with soft packaging (paper, plastic, cloth, or fiber)

- Cardboard boxes (even if the contents appear dry)
 - ie. Boxes for cereals, grains, pastas, etc.
- Food in glass jars, including unopened jars with waxed paper, foil, cellophane or cloth covers
- Foods, liquids, or beverages in crown capped bottles or containers with pull tab tops, corks, or screw caps
- All opened containers and packages; food in bags or canisters
- Cans that are dented, leaking, bulging, rusted, or with damaged labels. Cans may not be sold without all the required labeling information.

If it is determined that food must be discarded:

- **Document** the type and amount of food, costs, and the reason for disposal (for insurance, health department, and other regulatory purposes).
- Remove to a designated condemned food storage area away from food preparation and equipment storage.
 - Discarded refrigerated food may be stored in a refrigerated location separate from other food and held for credit until recorded by food supplier/distributor.
 - If the food must be retained until the distributor can credit the facility, it must be clearly labeled as “NOT FOR SALE”.
- Keep secured in covered refuse containers in an area preventing either service to the public, or accidental contamination of the facility and other food.
 - Large volumes of food should be disposed of by a refuse disposal company as soon as possible.
 - Small volumes of food can be denatured with a cleaning product (such as bleach) and placed in a covered refuse bin outside the facility.

Recovery after a Sewage Backup

Recovery involves the necessary steps for re-opening and returning to a normal safe operation. A food establishment that was ordered or required to cease operations may not re-open until authorization has been granted by the regulatory authority.

- In the case of plugged drain lines:
 - Contact a service company to find and remove the obstruction.
 - Replace worn or damaged plumbing as needed.
- In the case where the onsite sewage disposal system is malfunctioning:
 - Contact the Public Health Inspector for permit requirements.
 - Contact a sewage and plumbing contractor to pump the septic tank and haul away sewage to an approved disposal site until repairs can be made.
 - Contact a sewage disposal system installation contractor for repairs.
- If necessary, barricade the affected area to the public and employees away from the exposed sewage.

- Hire a professional restoration company with expertise in cleaning food establishments exposed to sewage backups.

Construction/Renovations

If business is closed for renovation or repairs, the plans may need to be reviewed by the Public Health Inspector and a re-opening inspection conducted by the regulating authority.