

Emergency Operation Plan for Water Interruption

The Georgia Department of Public Health [Rules and Regulations for Food Service](#) [511-6-1-03(2)(n)] allow for a food service establishment to operate for up to two hours after a water service interruption, provided that operation is able to continue safely. To continue operating beyond that time limit, the food service establishment must have a pre-approved emergency water interruption plan in place prior to the water interruption event. This document is provided to assist operators with the preparation of an Emergency Operation Plan for Water Interruption. Remember that the plan is required to be submitted for official review and authorization by the health authority prior to use. Thus, the time to request review and approval is not during an event. Upon approval, the plan will be included in the respective facility's record with the health department and the owner/operator of the facility will be authorized to activate the plan should an actual event lasting more than 2 hours present itself. [*Important Note: Toilet facilities shall always be provided if operation is to continue.]

Pre-Approved Plans

Prior to activating a pre-approved plan, ensure that it addresses the facility's ability to withstand the type of interruption that has been identified and that it's practical for the amount of time the problem is expected to persist.

The two main types of water interruptions to be prepared for are (1) **Actual Loss of Water Service or Do Not Use/Drink Advisory** and (2) **A Boiled Water Advisory**.

Operation Under a Boiled Water Advisory

During a boiled water advisory, water should come to a rolling boil for at least one minute prior to use. See **Table A** for specific areas to consider including in your plan as applicable to your operation.

Actual Loss of Water Service or Do Not Use/Drink Advisory

An approved water supply from an approved water source shall be available. In the event of a **Do Not Use/Drink Advisory**, the water contains a chemical contaminant that cannot be boiled away. Thus, do not use the water for consumption nor cleaning purposes. Turn off water supplied to equipment, such as drink and ice machines—and do not use products from these units as they may have become contaminated. See **Table B** for specific areas to consider including in your plan as applicable to your operation.

***Special Note Regarding Toilet Facilities: Toilet facilities must always be provided if the facility is to remain open.** If the toilet has a tank and water is not being provided to the facility, either an alternative source would need to be available for filling and flushing or portable toilets would need to be provided. In any event, if there is no toilet facility available, the facility must close.

The following charts-- provided courtesy of the Georgia Department of Public Health—cover each type of water interruption and will assist you in planning for resources such as alternative water that will be needed:

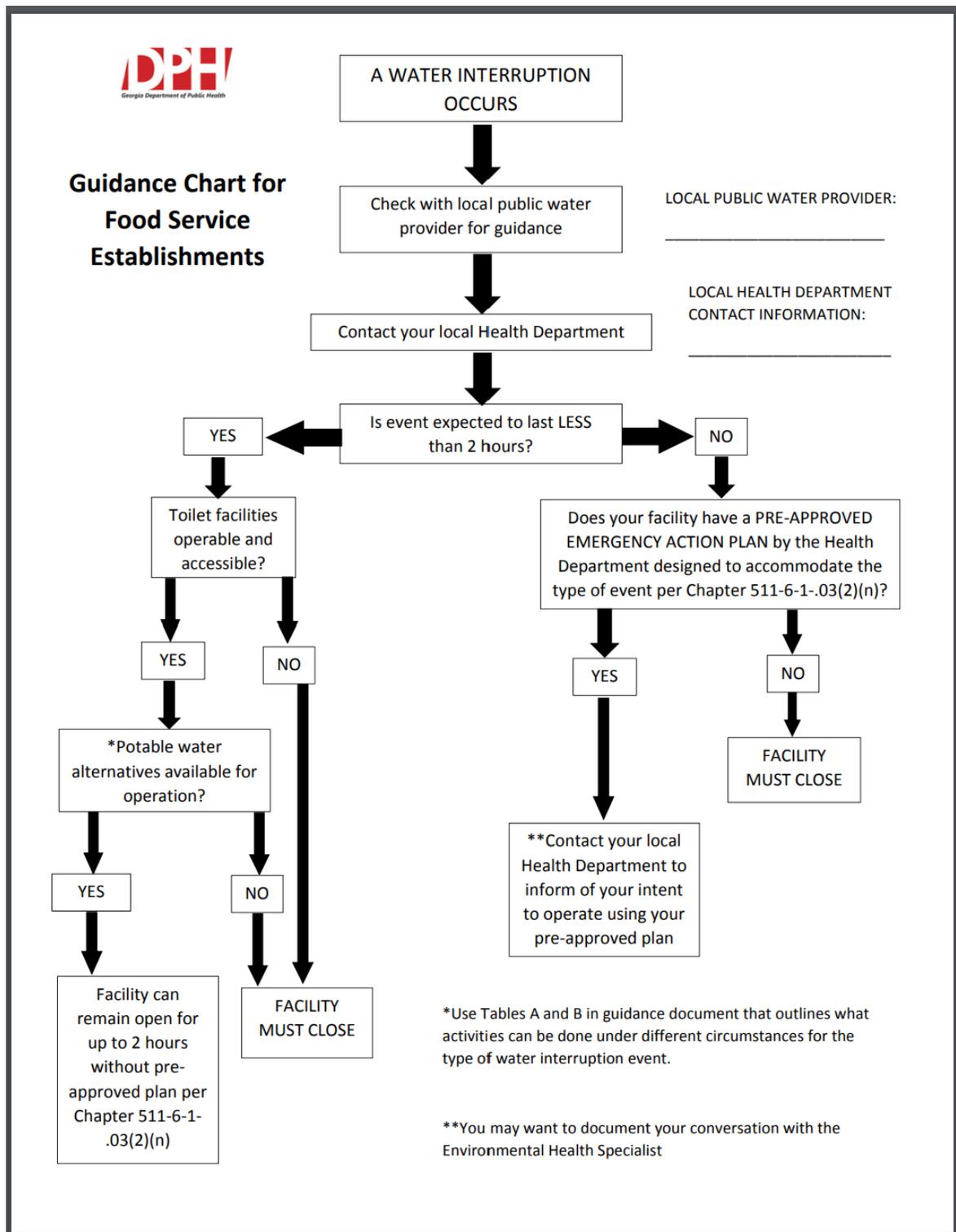


Table A

Activity	Biological Water Contamination
*Cooking	Boiled or potable water only
*Cleaning food contact surfaces	Boiled or potable water only
*Dishwashing	3-compartment sink with boiled or potable water only
*Handwashing	Boiled or potable water only
Ice making	Turn off machine until potable water is available; use commercially manufactured ice
Pre-mix soda machines (in bulk, packaged in kegs or bag-in-box and ready to use)	Acceptable to use
Post-mix soda machines (boxes of syrup and CO ₂ , using the facility water source)	Turn off until potable water is available
Coffee/tea machines	If water is boiled as part of the brewing process, acceptable to use

- ❖ It is recommended to use disposable dishes and flatware
- ❖ Biologically contaminated water *can* be used for flushing toilets and cleaning floors, walls and ceilings

Table B

Activity	Do Not Drink/Do Not Use
Cooking	Potable water only
Cleaning food contact surfaces	Potable water only
Dishwashing	3-compartment sink with potable water only
Handwashing	Potable water only
Ice making	Turn off machine until potable water is available; use commercially manufactured ice
Pre-mix soda machines (in bulk, packaged in kegs or bag-in-box and ready to use)	Acceptable to use
Post-mix soda machines (boxes of syrup and CO ₂ , using the facility water source)	Turn off until potable water is available
Coffee/tea machines	Potable water only
Toilet facilities	Portable toilets with adequate, potable water for handwashing accessible to employees during ALL hours of operation, is acceptable to use

- ❖ It is recommended to use disposable dishes and flatware, and individually wrapped pre-packaged foods with a very limited menu.
- ❖ If the cleanliness of the physical facilities becomes jeopardized by the fact that no water is available for cleaning – operations will need to be discontinued. It is not recommended to use chemically contaminated water for cleaning due to the potential of mixing unknown chemicals.

Resuming Operations After Water Restored

After a *Do Not Use/Drink Advisory* has been lifted, follow the instructions of the authorities.

After the Boil Water Advisory has lifted, the following measures should be taken—as applicable to the respective facility-- before resuming operation:

- Flush water pipes by running each faucet with cold water for several minutes.
- Flush, clean and sanitize equipment with water connections in accordance with manufacturer’s instructions.
- Warewashing machines should be run while empty for one full cycle after water lines have been flushed.
- Run water softeners through a regeneration cycle.
- Replace and sanitize water filter cartridges according to manufacturer’s instructions
- Drain reservoirs in tall buildings.
- Flush hot water tanks.
- Change out all filters.
- Flush beverage machines
- Flush drinking fountains: run continuously for five minutes.
- Flush ice machines by following the manufacturer’s instructions, including:
 - o Throw out any remaining ice
 - o Flush the water line to the ice machine inlet.
 - o Close the valve on the water line behind the ice machine and disconnect the water line from the ice machine inlet.
 - o Open the valve, run five gallons of water through the valve and dispose of the water.
 - o Close the valve.
 - o Reconnect the water line the ice machine inlet.
 - o Open the valve.
 - o Flush the water lines to in the ice machine.
 - o Turn on the machine.
 - o Make ice for one hour and dispose of the ice.
 - o Clean and sanitize all parts and surfaces that were in contact with any contaminated water and ice following the manufacturer’s instructions.

* Adhere to any additional guidance provided by regulating authorities.

After approval of your plan, periodically review the plan for any need for modification so that it is usable if ever needed.

The measures presented were adapted from advisories and guidance provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Lake Cumberland District Health Department (Kentucky), the Massachusetts Public Health, and the Georgia Department of Public Health.

OTHER RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

The following are good resources for more detailed guidance to assist with the development of your Emergency Operation Plans:

[Emergency Action Plan for Retail Food Service Establishments](#)

[Water Interruption? Plan for it Now](#)

This document is provided courtesy of the Center for Environmental Health, Cobb & Douglas Public Health.