

# Restoring Service After Extended Water Interruption

## Guidelines for Food Establishments

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Unsafe drinking water is a known cause of illness. During a water supply emergency, water service is often stopped to reduce the source of contamination for food, equipment, utensils, and hands. Once a safe supply of water is restored, all equipment connected to the previous supply of water must be properly sanitized to remove the previous contamination before you begin food, drink, or ice preparation.

The following guidance should not replace reviewing the operating materials with each piece of equipment or confirming proper restoration practice with the water supplier. It is the food establishment's responsibility to ensure the establishment is operating in a safe manner that protects the employees and the public.

Before you begin:

- **Review the information from your water control authority.** It is likely they have provided you information about the water disruption. They will also usually provide directions about flushing your water pipes and faucets. If you do not have contact information, you can find contact information on your water bill.
- **Contact your food establishment's regulatory authority to see if there are specific steps required to reopen.** The regulatory authority for most food establishments is the local health department. Check your most recent food inspection report to determine contact information.
- **Find all of your operating manuals for food service equipment connected to water.** Follow the directions on your machines or in the manual to make sure you clean and sanitize the equipment properly. You will also need to replace disposable or media-based filters that cannot be sanitized using manufacturer's directions. Filters will need to be replaced prior to any equipment startup.
- **Make an action list to make sure you check and verify each piece of equipment.** This guidance includes checkboxes to help you check tasks off the list once you complete the activity.
- **If in doubt, seek the service of a trained professional.** Your local health department or regulatory authority may also provide assistance.

All equipment that has been in contact with drinking water should be flushed and disinfected with an approved food-grade sanitizer. The following pieces of equipment are commonly found in food establishments and must be properly flushed and sanitized individually before restoring to service:

1. Water Faucets (Sinks, Hose Bibs, Filling Stations, etc.)
2. Carbonated Fountain Drink Machines
3. Beverage "Gun" Dispensers
4. Coffee Makers and Tea Brewers
5. Low-Temperature/Chemical Sanitizing Dish Machines
6. Three Compartment and Food Prep Sinks
7. Ice Makers
8. Self-Serve Bulk Water Dispensers
9. Water Softeners
10. Water Filtration Units and Reverse Osmosis Systems
11. Produce Mistlers
12. Water Tanks and Reservoirs
13. Drinking Water Fountains

## Restoring Service After Extended Water Interruption Checklist

**Cleaning and Flushing Instructions for Specific Equipment** - If there is a difference between the advice in this document and the owner's manual, follow the owner's manual.

### 1. **Water Faucets** (Sinks, Hose Bibs, Filling Stations, etc.)

- If applicable, disconnect your water supply from the water softener and all other treatment devices prior to flushing water lines.
- Remove screens from faucets and run one cold water tap for at least 5 minutes; run all additional taps for one-minute or until the water temperature at each tap becomes colder. When flushing cold water taps, run one tap at a time. If you have a single-lever faucet, set it to run cold water first. Weather permitting, flush outdoor taps.
- When cold water lines are complete, clear hot-water pipes and water heater of water. Turn on all faucets to hot water and run for 15 minutes for a 40-gallon hot water tank or 30 minutes for an 80-gallon tank.

### 2. **Carbonated Fountain Drink Machines**

- If you are unfamiliar with routine flushing procedures, contact your fountain drink technician for service or instructions and recommendations.
- Replace any water filters.
- Disconnect syrup connection. Run each beverage valve on each dispenser for at least 2 minutes.
- Remove nozzles and diffusers to wash, rinse and sanitize according to normal procedures.  
Note: Many manufacturer directions suggest using a sanitizing solution that is not chlorine-based.
- Run each beverage valve for at least 2 minutes to remove sanitizer residue. Repeat.
- For computerized drink mix systems, run a carbonated and a non-carbonated beverage for 2 minutes.
- Sanitize ice bin and ice chute, if present.
- Clean and sanitize exterior of unit.
- Run hot water down fountain machine drain to clean lines of debris or mold growth.

### 3. **Beverage "Gun" Dispensers**

- Run water through the line until the water becomes colder.
- Remove the nozzle of the bar gun and wash, rinse, sanitize all external components. (If nozzle is difficult to remove, soak in carbonated water.)
- Immerse gun and nozzle in food-grade sanitizer. Soak as directed (usually 30 seconds to 2 minutes).
- Reattach nozzle.
- Run each flavor on the gun for 10 seconds to purge any residual sanitizer.
- Clean and sanitize ice bin if present.

### 4. **Coffee Makers/Tea Brewers**

- Brew and discard 4 pots of hot water per unit.
- Wash, rinse, and sanitize food contact surfaces.

### 5. **Low-Temperature/Chemical Sanitizing Dish Machines**

- Run the empty dishwasher through the wash, rinse, sanitize cycle three times to flush the water lines and ensure the machine is sanitized internally before washing equipment in it. Make sure to use test strips to ensure chemical sanitizer is at proper concentration in the machine.

### 6. **Three Compartment and Food Prep Sinks**

- Wash, rinse, and sanitize each basin once the water lines have been flushed.

## 7. Ice Makers

- Turn off the machine.
- Close the valve on the water line behind the ice machine and disconnect the water line from the ice machine inlet.
- Open the valve, run five gallons of water through the valve and dispose of the water.
- Close the valve.
- Reconnect the water line the ice machine inlet.
- Open the valve.
- Flush the water lines in the ice machine.
- Turn on the machine.
- Make ice for one hour (at least three batches) and dispose of the ice.
- Replace disposable-type filter cartridges.
- Wash, rinse, and sanitize the ice bin.

## 8. Self-Serve Bulk Water Dispensers

- Flush beverage machines
- Disposable-type filter cartridges must be replaced if they are not able to be sanitized according to manufacturer directions.

## 9. Water Softeners

- Adjust water supply valves so softener is online.
- Switch the softener to manual regeneration.
- Run water softeners through one (1) regeneration cycle.
- Adjust the timer to the current time of day and resume normal online operation.
- If the unit is a media filter bed-type unit (e.g. sand filter): isolate unit from the household water system and consult manufacturer, supplier or qualified plumbing or water treatment professional on method to disinfect the unit.

## 10. Water Filtration Units and Reverse Osmosis Systems

- If you are unable to sanitize the treatment system, remove from service.
- Sanitize system as recommended by manufacturer – include storage tanks.
- Replace any disposable filters.
- Contact your water treatment provider for more information.

## 11. Produce Mistlers

- Remove all produce from bins under misters.
- Flush water through misters for 10-15 minutes.
- Disconnect, clean, and sanitize misting nozzles.
- Clean and sanitize produce bins prior to re-stocking.

## 12. Water Tanks and Reservoirs

- If a water-holding reservoir is present in a building or on the property; consult with their facility engineer or a plumber about draining and disinfecting the reservoir before flushing plumbing systems.

## 13. Drinking Water Fountains

- Run continuously for five minutes.
- Wash, rinse, and sanitize faucet and basin.

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