



Washington County Health Department

1302 Pennsylvania Avenue, Hagerstown, MD 21742

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Procedures Following a Fire for Licensed Food Service Facilities

1. Contact 911

If a fire has occurred at your food service facility, you must contact 911, even if the fire has been fully extinguished or is considered minor in nature. The Washington County Fire Department will evaluate the extent of the fire and determine the possible cause.

2. Notify the Health Department

You must notify our office at 240-313-3400 and report the fire. An answering service is available for calls made on weekdays after 5:00PM and on the weekend.

3. Discard Contaminated Food

Any food or product, including wrapped, prepackaged, canned or any other type of packaging, that was directly exposed to fire, smoke, soot, excessive heat, water or fire suppression chemicals must be discarded or destroyed. These agents can adversely affect the contents of the wrapped or packaged items, rendering them unsafe. Food products that exceed an internal temperature of 41 degrees Fahrenheit for more than 4 hours must also be destroyed. Discarded food must be properly destroyed to prevent accidental consumption.

4. Clean and Sanitize

All food contact surfaces, food service equipment, cooking surfaces and food storage surfaces affected by smoke, soot, fire suppression chemicals or water resulting from the fire must be properly cleaned and sanitized.

Surfaces must be cleaned with warm soapy water, rinsed with clean water, and sanitized using a bleach solution (50-100 ppm required) or a quaternary ammonium solution (200 ppm required). Test strips must be available at the facility and used to determine the level of sanitizing agent. All walls, floors and ceiling surfaces affected by smoke, soot, fire suppression chemicals or water resulting from the fire must be properly cleaned.

When Can My Food Service Facility Reopen?

Once the above steps have been completed, the food service facility may only reopen **AFTER** an inspection and approval from the Health Department is given.

If the hood fire suppression system or a portable fire extinguisher has discharged, servicing by a licensed fire extinguisher service company (approved by the Maryland State Fire Marshal) is required prior to re-use of the fire suppression equipment. Additionally, any violations identified by the Health Department or Fire Department must be adequately corrected before the food service facility may reopen. Such corrective actions include, but are not limited to: replacing filters, cleaning or repair of the hood by a licensed professional, and/or repair of food service equipment.