



FoodBytes

Indiana State Department of Health

Boil water advisories: What to do?

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What should happen when a public utility issues a “public notice” that water may not be safe?

Such public notice is issued whenever there are possible violations of the potable water regulations. This may come as a boil water *notice, advisory, or order*, but the action businesses should take is essentially the same. Any establishment using water in its daily operation, for handwashing, dishwashing, food preparation, etc., must use only potable water.

Since a public notice from the local utility means there is a chance the water is not safe, the establishment should not operate unless an alternative safe water supply is found. A public notice is required when something has happened that might lead to contamination of the potable water source.



IDEM's role

Rule 327 IAC 8-2.1-7 “Public notification of drinking water violations” requires public notification by the utility to all affected users for all violations of drinking water regulations. This can mean that a water sample was taken and the result showed contamination present, or a repair has created a potential problem.

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Legislature changes “food establishment” law

The Indiana Legislature has passed new law that defines “food establishment” in a way that may be easier for operators to understand and regulators to enforce.



for religious purposes, if:

(A) the individuals separately or jointly provide or prepare, free of charge, and consume their own food or that of others attending the gathering; and

(B) the gathering is for a purpose of the organization.

Gatherings for the purpose of the organization include funerals, wedding receptions, christenings, bar or bat mitzvahs, baptisms, communions, and other events or celebrations sponsored by the organization.

(3) A vehicle used to transport food solely for distribution to the needy, either free of charge or for a nominal donation.

(4) A private gathering of individuals who separately or jointly provide or prepare and consume their own food or that of others attending the gathering, regardless of whether the gathering is held on public or private property.

(5) Except for food prepared by a for-profit entity, a venue of the sale of food prepared for the

organization:

(A) that is organized for:
(i) religious purposes; or
(ii) educational purposes in a nonpublic educational setting;

(B) that is exempt from taxation under Section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code; and

(C) that offers the food for sale to the final consumer at an event held for the benefit of the organization; unless the food is being provided in a restaurant or a cafeteria with an extensive menu of prepared foods.

(6) Except for food prepared by a for-profit entity, an Indiana non-profit organization that:

(A) is organized for civic, fraternal, veterans, or charitable purposes;

(B) is exempt from taxation under Section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code; and

(C) offers food for sale to the final consumer at an event held for the benefit of the organization; if the events conducted by the organization take place for not more than fifteen (15) days in a calendar year.

One change included in this language is that organizations must

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At issue was the specific wording that determined who was covered by the food safety regulations and therefore subject to inspection, and who was not.

Changes were made to IC 16-18-2-137 that illustrate exemptions to the term “food establishment.” Here is the new language:

The term does not include the following:

(1) A dwelling where food is prepared on the premises by the occupants, free of charge, for their consumption or for consumption by their guests.

(2) A gathering of individuals at a venue of an organization that is organized for educational purposes in a nonpublic educational setting or

Food safety Web sites prove valuable resource

Need food safety information quickly? There are a number of valuable tools available to local health departments with Internet access. Here are a few of our favorite web sites. Type addresses carefully.

Good places to start are these sites.

FDA - CFSAN

<http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov/list.html>

FDA - Retail Food Safety

<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~ear/retail.html>

FDA - “Bad Bug Book”

<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~mow/intro.html>

Indiana Code

<http://www.state.in.us/legislative/ic/code/>

Indiana Administrative Code

<http://www.state.in.us/legislative/iac/>

FDA Model Food Code 2005

<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/fc05-toc.html>

U. S. officials ask China's help after ingredient scare

U. S. representatives have requested that officials from the Peoples Republic of China work toward a common goal of food safety in plants that may be processing food or animal feeds.

Public officials were alerted to problems when an unusually high number of cats and dogs were becoming ill and tests showed that the foods they were eating were contaminated with melamine, an industrial chemical that is not approved for any foods in the U. S.

Melamine was found in wheat gluten and rice protein concentrate that were distributed to several pet food manufacturers via a California agricultural importer.

U. S. officials want prompt action from the Chinese government to "accomplish certain goals related to food safety," according to information released recently by the USDA. The chemical melamine was discovered recently in feeds destined for pets and farm animals in the U. S.

This is what the U. S. asked of Chinese officials at the recent high level meeting in Washington:

- Detailed information about the Chinese government's procedures, methodology, and technology for testing and quarantine, as well as information about its control measures;
- Raw data and the results of the testing by Chinese government entities of regulated products;

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Inside Story Headline

The recent foodborne illness outbreak associated with peanut butter is prompting the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to step up its inspection of peanut butter manufacturing plants.

So far, the outbreak has not gone away. First reported last year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) now says, as of the end of May, there have been a total of 628 persons infected with an outbreak strain of *Salmonella* serotype tennessee reported from 47 states.

According to the CDC, investigators determined that illness was strongly associated with consumption of two brands (Peter Pan or Great Value) of peanut butter produced at the same plant. Based on these findings, the plant ceased production and recalled both products on Feb. 14, 2007. New case reports decreased substantially

"Up until this point, peanut butter has not been considered a high-risk food." - Dr. Acheson

after the product recall.

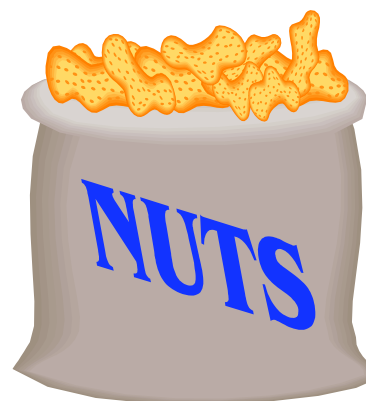
Consumers are still asked to immediately discard any remaining jars of peanut butter with a plant code beginning with 2111. The CDC says this outbreak demonstrates the potential for widespread illness from a broadly distributed contaminated product. Peanut butter had not previously been implicated in a foodborne illness outbreak in the United States.

The recalled products were not limited to the two peanut butter brands, but extended to products that used peanut butter from the same ConAgra manufacturing plant in Sylvester, GA. These ranged from ice cream toppings to dessert products to peanut butter

biscuits sold as dog treats.

Dr. David Acheson, chief medical officer of the FDA's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition said, "Peanut butter will almost certainly move up on the FDA's list of high-risk foods, and the agency bases its inspection schedule on the relative risk of foods.

"We now know peanut butter can be a vehicle for salmonella," he added.



Boil water advisories (continued)

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Many operators don't realize how many places use water in their establishments on a daily basis. Water usage would have to be halted if the water was deemed potentially unsafe.

Equipment that is plumbed directly into the municipal water supply and therefore should not be used during a notice include: carbonated fountain drink machines, beverage "gun" dispensers, ice machines, and self-serve water dispensers. Water is also used for cooking, washing produce, wiping cloth solutions, low-temperature dish machines and, most importantly, handwashing.

Most establishments use water in such quantities that treating enough water to continue operation would be a monumental task. But it would be permissible to do so.

Information can be found on the ISDH Food Protection Web site on disinfecting water. Operators may also reduce food production to minimal levels to lessen their water needs.

Stop and Call

It is important that local inspectors educate operators about what to do if their water utility issues a notice. Don't assume they will do the right thing because most are hesitant to close or reduce production. Explain that they must stop or reduce operations and call the health department if a notice is received. The local health officer may order a business closed if operators fail to implement emergency procedures.

Food establishment operators who feel they can provide enough potable water for safe operation (purchasing bottled water, boiling, etc.) should explain their intent to the local health department inspector who may then approve the business to continue operating. The operator should also consider ways to reduce water consumption, such as using bagged ice and using single-service items.

The water utility will have water samples tested, which will determine if the water is safe. It will take a number of hours before



the test results are known. If the samples are not good, food establishments using water must remain closed.

Inspectors should know the "24 hour" access number for the utility and build a relationship with employees. Let them know they need to call any time with problem test results.

But even if samples are satisfactory, establishments still cannot operate until they flush out their water lines to remove any sediment or lingering contamination. If there are screens or filters in water lines, these should be removed and cleaned or replaced as appropriate.

When a utility has issued a public notice, establishment operators need health department approval to resume operation per Sec. 109 of 410 IAC 7-24.

Inside Story Headline

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be exempt under Sec. 501 of the Internal Revenue Code. Another change states that organizations not created for religious purposes may operate not more than 15 days per calendar year without being subject to inspection.

Organizations exempt from

compliance can no longer waive that exemption. Previous language of IC 16-24-5-4 has been repealed.

Members of the Indiana Environmental Health Association were instrumental in



suggesting the proposed code language and testifying before legislative committees.

The new law took effect July 1.

Retail Food Security Project Still Short Of Its Goal

The Retail Food Security Project is a long way from reaching the goal of 1,500 security assessments of Indiana food establishments. Of the 43 counties that volunteered to conduct risk assessment with a sampling of food establishments in their jurisdictions, only eight have met or exceeded their commitment.

“The goals are to ascertain the level of food defense preparedness at retail food establishments,” says Travis Goodman, one of two Food

Defense Specialists for ISDH.

Food Defense Specialist George Jones adds, “We hope then to develop a plan to address vulnerabilities uncovered by the assessment.”

The object is to complete an assessment of 5 percent of Hoosier establishments (approximately 1,500) and then develop educational programs to assist the retail food industry. But to date, the number of completed surveys falls short of this goal.

Goodman and Jones both stress the completing of food defense surveys by retail food establishment operators is not regulatory in any way, and the assessment forms are not public documents under Indiana law and will be kept confidential.

Results of the project are expected to be presented during the Food Symposium in the spring of 2008.

US officials ask China's help (cont.)

(Continued from page 3)

- Imposing a requirement for mandatory registration of Chinese firms that intend to export food and feed products to the U. S. and prohibiting the export to the U. S. of products from unregistered firms;
- Providing a list of all registered Chinese firms with periodic updates;
- The clearances necessary for Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to conduct inspections in China, as deemed necessary to protect public health in the U. S.;
- The clearances necessary for the FDA to conduct systems audits to confirm the registered Chinese firms meet U. S. government food-safety requirements.

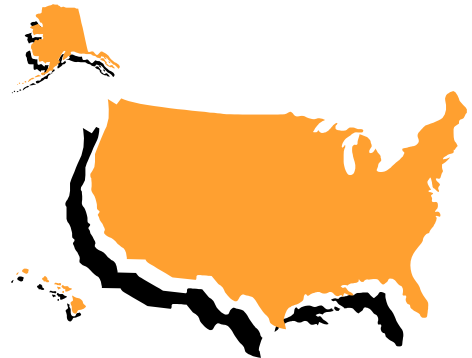
Due to the lack of adequate staffing, only about 1 percent of imported food is inspected, and

about 0.5 percent is routinely tested. It becomes important for food manufacturers to assure that food safety plans are in place and ingredients are safe.

Countries of origin are identi-



fied for processed foods, but not the source of the ingredients used in those foods. This means the food labels will not identify the country of origin for the various ingredients.



China provides a large percentage of food ingredients used by U. S. companies. Currently no meat, poultry, or eggs are imported from China.

There have not been any problems reported with foods intended for human consumption that may have contained ingredients of Chinese origin.



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We're on the web!

[www.in.gov/isdh/
regsvcs/foodprot](http://www.in.gov/isdh/regsvcs/foodprot)

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Bits, Bytes, and Blurbs

Send your questions to the e-mail or postal address above.

- The ISDH Laboratory has a new home. It is now located at 550 W. 16th St., Indianapolis, after spending many years on Barnhill Dr. Food samples should still be submitted first to Dan Gala as in the past.**
- All meats sold in Indiana's Retail Food Establishments must be inspected. The only marks of inspection recognized are from USDA or the State Board of Animal Health. There are no agreements to accept inspection marks from any other state, so any such products would be considered unapproved.**
- Check the ISDH Food Protection Web site to find the latest**

guidance documents and access to current codes. Inspectors should direct food establishment operators to the ISDH site to download the food code. Having electronic access meets the requirement of having the food code available.

- The use of HACCP principals at the retail level continues to grow. Inspectors should stress the understanding of food flows and processes to operators. They must understand the impor-**

tance of "control" at each point. Ask your field representative for guidance.

Calendar

IEHA Fall Conference

September 24 - 26, Merrillville

ISDH Orientation

Dec. 4, 5, 6, 2007 at ISDH

Seafood HACCP

Coming in 2008

ISDH Food Symposium

March 11 - 13, 2008, Indianapolis