



# Michigan Department of Agriculture

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# Food Digest

Food and Dairy Division Winter 2005

## Emergency Action Plans (EAPs) for retail food establishments available online

Disasters and emergencies. These days no business is immune from them. Now retail food establishments have a practical and effective tool to use when planning for and responding to emergencies.

The National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation, the Michigan Restaurant Association and the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) along with the Detroit Department of Health and Wellness Promotion, Macomb County Health Department, and the Oakland County Health Division have partnered to create a 48-page booklet **Emergency Action Plans for Retail Food Establishments**. This is now available online at [www.michigan.gov/mda](http://www.michigan.gov/mda) and will be available in print at a later date.

"The EAPs came as a result of the Blackout of 2003," said Dan Wyant, Michigan Department of Agriculture Director. "Although Michigan had been hit by localized power outages, the size and duration of that blackout caught many by surprise," said Wyant.

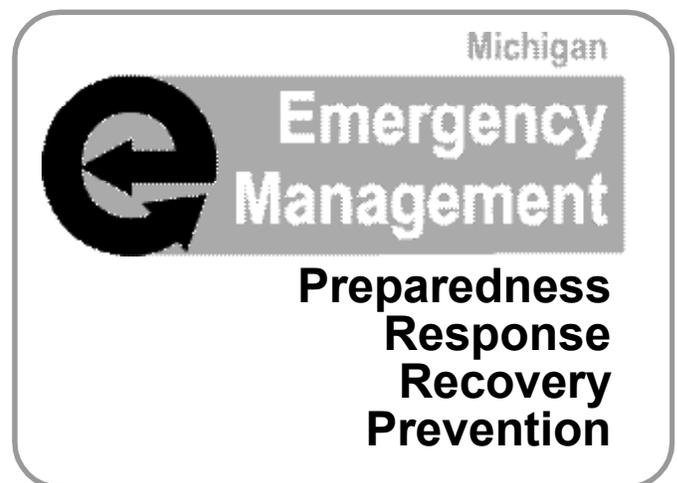
"Many food establishments experienced significant economic loss, and received conflicting messages regarding what they could and could not do during the blackout, which lasted up to five days in some areas," said Tom Crook, Food Service Sanitation Section manager with the Michigan Department of Agriculture. "The EAPs were developed to ensure government agencies and food industry managers have clear guidance on what to do in emergencies in the future."

Crook says when it comes to emergencies: "It's generally not a matter of **if** they happen but rather **when** they happen. Food-related businesses must be prepared." This **Emergency Action Plans for Retail Food Establishments** is a model for the nation. When it was still in draft form, the Centers for Disease Control called MDA to request draft copies to help businesses recover from the devastating hurricanes in Florida.

### Suspicious incidents to look for and who to call

*As a business owner, you should be on the lookout for suspicious activities that might indicate a terrorist and/or criminal activity. Report the following situations immediately.*

- Unusual sickness among staff or unusual numbers of sick or dead animals, birds or insects in your immediate vicinity.
- Unusual powders or liquids located where no such substances should be found, particularly around air handling equipment, cooling or heating systems, access ways for livestock or animal houses, processing facilities, or populated buildings.
- Signs of break-ins or tampering  
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You can find information about and obtain copies of the Food Law of 2000 and the Food Code as well as training, certification, and other educational materials on MDA's Web site: [www.michigan.gov/mda](http://www.michigan.gov/mda)

- Suspicious packages left in locations where a package would be out of place, or that is not the type, origin or sender that is expected or customary.
- Suspicious individuals near or around livestock or domestic animals, or in or around food or agriculture processing, storage, distribution or retail facilities.
- Unexpected spraying activities whether via aircraft, truck or individuals with hand held sprayers in areas where such activity would not be customary or appropriate, or evidence that such unexplained activity recently occurred.
- Any apparent loss or theft of potentially dangerous process ingredients, industrial chemicals or insecticides / pesticides from processor, storage or distribution facilities. Report to local law enforcement any theft of these products, no matter how small. Report of theft may provide potentially vital information in the prevention of a larger, more damaging terrorist or criminal act.
- Any suspicious activity in or around any public or private utility sub-systems such as electrical substations, water pump stations, telephone system components, or public transportation systems (roads, bridges, rails or airfields) in the immediate vicinity of your facilities.

Michigan citizens should report unusual or suspicious events to their local police. Incidents involving contamination of food provided by restaurants and other food service establishments should be reported to your local health department. Incidents involving other food establishments, milk products or animal health issues, should be reported to the MDA regional office in your area during normal hours or after hours to the MDA 24/7 emergency line at 517-373-0440.

### MDA Food & Dairy Division Main Office

(517) 373-1060

#### Information on Line

To find or contact your local health department, go to [www.malph.org/page.cfm/108/](http://www.malph.org/page.cfm/108/)

Additional info on food safety, laws, and regulations is available on MDA's web site: [www.michigan.gov/mda](http://www.michigan.gov/mda)

### Food & Dairy Division Regional Offices

#### Region 1 – Upper Peninsula

#### Region 2 – Northern

Traverse City, MI (231) 922-5210

#### Region 3 – West Central

#### Region 5 - Southwest

Grand Rapids, MI (616) 356-0600

#### Region 4 – East Central

Saginaw, MI (989) 758-1778

#### Region 6 – South Central

Lansing, MI (517) 373-1060

#### Region 7 - Detroit

Southfield, MI (248) 356-1700

### One person does make a difference— and sometimes for the worse.

One recent outbreak of foodborne illness in Michigan affected many people. Some 26 victims reported nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps and diarrhea. Many other of those affected went unrecorded.

The illness resulted from just one ill employee. An extensive investigation showed that just one food service employee—suffering from diarrhea caused by the highly infectious Norovirus—had failed to wash hands adequately while at work. He had used the employee and customer bathroom at least twelve times during the two days he worked while ill. The employee had also failed to report to his employer that he was ill. By ignoring these rules, he contaminated multiple food items he was preparing for restaurant meals and catered luncheons. Three common ways that the highly infectious Norovirus can be transmitted are:

- Eating food or drinking liquids contaminated with Norovirus.
- Touching surfaces or objects contaminated with Norovirus and then touching items that are put in mouth.
- Having direct contact with another person who is infected and showing symptoms.

No antiviral medicine nor vaccine is available for Norovirus. Behind many foodborne illness statistics issued by the Centers for Disease Control are stories like this. One person **does** make a difference!

### Risky business

The Centers for Disease Control has identified five behaviors and practices as most prevalent contributing factors for foodborne illness. The five risk factors are:

- Poor personal hygiene
- Food from unsafe sources
- Inadequate cooking
- Improper holding temperatures
- Contaminated equipment

A reduction in the occurrence of the five high-risk behaviors will reduce the amount of suffering and number of deaths attributed to foodborne illness. MDA has set a goal to reduce the prevalence of the risk factors in food establishments by 25% by the year 2010. Your local health department sanitarian and MDA inspector will share detailed information on upcoming inspections.

Always  
Wash  
Your  
Hands

