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Disaster/Emergency Preparedness – Retail Food FAQs

1. As a retail food facility operator what concerns should I have related to disaster/emergency preparedness?

In the event of a disaster that occurs during business hours, you may have staff or customers in need of assistance for several hours, or perhaps days, before other forms of help are available.

2. What steps can I take to prepare?

- Encourage your employees to have emergency kits at home and in their personal vehicles.
- Consider stocking basic emergency kits at the facility. This could include food (survival type), potable water, first aid kits, blankets, flashlights, and basic hygiene products.
- Teach key employees how to shut off the natural gas supply to the building.
- Evaluate the facility for earthquake safety (e.g., secure water heaters and shelving, provide shatter-proof lightcovers, eliminate toppling hazards.)

Visit the following websites for further information:

OSHA Earthquake Preparedness and Response

<https://www.osha.gov/earthquakes>

The Great California Shakeout

<https://www.shakeout.org/california/businesses/>

Small Business Administration (SBA) Prepare for Emergencies

<https://www.shakeout.org/california/businesses/>

Ready.gov

<https://www.ready.gov/business>

Prepare My Business for an Emergency (Department of Homeland Security)

<https://www.dhs.gov/how-do-i/prepare-my-business-emergency>

3. Can I operate during a disaster?

A retail facility can operate during a disaster if it can do so safely. For example, a back-up generator may be used to provide lighting and run refrigerators. Check with the local building and fire departments regarding the use of a generator.

4. How can I keep informed during a disaster?

Sign up for the Contra Costa County Community Warning System alerts and the social media accounts of the Sheriff's Department and Health Services Departments:

<https://www.cocosheriff.org/disaster-preparedness/community-warning-system>

<https://www.facebook.com/ContraCostaHealthServices>

<https://twitter.com/cocohealth/>

Also make sure Environmental Health has your current contact information, including email, since our agency may send out informational emails during a disaster.