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## Guidance for Reopening

### Retail Food Establishments After Flooding

This information is intended for licensed retail food establishments, but may be applied in any situation where food products and equipment may be contaminated by flooding.

#### **Closure**

If one or more of the following hazards exist, the establishment should be closed until the hazard(s) have been addressed:

- If the building was damaged or may have been damaged (contact the Pikes Peak Regional Building Department for a clearance assessment).
- Any part of the food establishment was flooded (all flood waters are considered to be contaminated).
- Sewage backed up into the facility.
- Plumbing does not drain and/or toilets are not usable.
- The drinking water supply for the food establishment was damaged and subject to potential contamination (unless an alternative potable water source is available, or requirements of a boil water order are followed).
- Customers or staff must walk through sewage-contaminated water to get into the facility.
- Power was interrupted and potentially hazardous foods may have been out of temperature control for four or more hours.
- Any other hazard(s) that may compromise food safety.

#### **Reopening Inspection**

Conduct a complete self-inspection to ensure that normal operations can be resumed safely and without compromising food safety. If your establishment was closed by Public Health, you must schedule a reopening inspection. Contact the Environmental Health Division at 719.578.3199, option 3, to schedule the reopening inspection.

#### **Sanitization**

Decontaminate and sanitize equipment and structural surfaces that are salvageable. Thoroughly wash and rinse surfaces before sanitizing. Follow decontamination and sanitization procedures using chemical sanitization, e.g. chlorine bleach at a concentration of 100-200ppm (1 tablespoon of regular, unscented bleach in 1 gallon of potable water), Quaternary Ammonium at a concentration of 200ppm (or as required by the manufacturers label), or other approved sanitizers. Proper decontamination will eliminate harmful microorganisms, chemical residues, and filth that could pose a food safety risk.

### **Discard Damaged Food Products**

Discard all food and packaging that has been in contact with flood waters, unless the food is in a hermetically sealed can that has not been damaged.

- Destroy refrigerated and frozen foods, such as meat, poultry, shell eggs, egg products, and milk that have been immersed in floodwaters. ***If in doubt, throw it out.***
- Inspect canned foods and discard any food in damaged cans. Can damage is shown by swelling, leaking, punctures, holes, fractures, extensive deep rusting or any crushing/denting that is severe enough to prevent normal stacking or opening with a manual wheel-type can opener.
- Discard products in containers with screw caps, snap-lids, crimped-caps (soda bottles), twist-caps, flip-top, snap-open and similar type closures that have been submerged in floodwaters.
- Do not salvage food packed in plastic, paper, cardboard, cloth and similar containers that have been water damaged.
- Undamaged, commercially prepared foods in all-metal cans or retort pouches can be saved if you remove labels that can come off. Thoroughly wash the cans, rinse them, and then disinfect them with a sanitizing solution consisting of 1 tablespoon bleach per gallon of potable water. Finally, re-label containers that had the labels removed, including the expiration date, with a marker.

Complete proper and safe disposal of condemned food items in a manner consistent with federal, state and local solid waste storage, transportation, and disposal regulations. This must be done to ensure these products do not reappear as damaged or salvaged merchandise for human consumption. It is recommended that an inventory of all discarded foods be documented.

### **Physical Facilities**

- If you have a well that has been flooded, the water must be disinfected and tested to confirm it is safe after floodwaters recede. If you suspect that your well may be contaminated, information is available on Public Health's website for disinfection procedures: <http://www.elpasocountyhealth.org>.
- If you have a public water supply, confirm that potable water is available from your water purveyor. Follow boil order requirements (if in effect) or utilize an alternative source of potable water.
- Thoroughly wash all surfaces within the establishment (e.g. floors, walls and ceilings) with a hot detergent solution made with potable water. Rinse detergents and residues from the surfaces with potable water and treat all cleaned surfaces with a sanitizing solution (see above section on sanitization).
- Prevent or clean up mold. Structural components of the building (e.g. walls, piping, ceiling and HVAC system/ventilation systems) affected by flood waters or other damage, should be cleaned, repaired, and disinfected where possible. Remove and discard wall board that has been water damaged. Cement walls that have mold damage can be reconditioned.
- Thoroughly clean and free debris from any exhaust systems. Consult professional service technicians as needed. Water damaged ventilation systems that cannot be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized should be removed and replaced. In all cases, replace all ventilation air filters.

## Equipment

- Thoroughly wash metal pans, ceramic dishes and utensils (including can openers) with soap and hot water. Rinse and then sanitize by boiling in potable water or immersing for 15 minutes in a solution of 1 tablespoon of unscented, regular chlorine bleach per gallon of drinking water or other approved sanitizer. Follow instructions on the sanitizer label for the correct concentration.
- Thoroughly wash countertops, equipment and non-food contact surfaces with soap and hot water. Rinse and then sanitize by applying a solution of 1 tablespoon of unscented liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of drinking water or other approved sanitizer. Air dry.
- Use a dishwasher or three-compartment sink to wash, rinse and sanitize equipment and utensils using potable water.
  - Sanitize with regular, unscented chlorine bleach at a concentration of 50-100ppm (1/2 tablespoon of bleach in 1 gallon of potable water) or other sanitizers approved for food contact surfaces and equipment.
  - Mechanical dishwashing machines must provide a final sanitizing rinse of either 50ppm chlorine (for chemical sanitizing machines) or 180°F final sanitizing rinse (for hot water sanitizing machines).
  - An approved test kit should be available for sanitizing solutions to ensure that an appropriate sanitizer concentration is provided. A maximum-registering thermometer or temperature sensitive tape should be available to check that the hot water sanitizing rinse reaches 180°F, or that the utensil surface reaches a temperature of at least 160°F.
  - Before using a dishwasher, run it empty through the wash-rinse-sanitize cycle three times to flush the water lines and to ensure that the dishwasher is cleaned and sanitized internally before washing equipment and utensils in it.
- Refrigerated display and storage cases and other refrigerator equipment used to store food must be cleared of all contaminated products and their juices and residues prior to cleaning.
- Refrigerated storage equipment must be thoroughly washed inside and outside with a hot detergent solution and rinsed free of detergents and residues. Give special attention to lighting, drainage areas, ventilation vents, corners, cracks and crevices, door handles and door gaskets. Treat all clean surfaces with a sanitizing solution. (See section above on sanitizing.)
- If the insulation, door gaskets, hoses etc. are damaged by flood residue or liquefied food items, replace or discard these refrigerated display cases and storage cases and other refrigerator equipment.
- Remove and replace all filters on equipment if they are not designed to be cleaned in place.
- Replace all ice machine filters and beverage dispenser filters; flush all water lines, including steam water lines and ice machine water lines, for 10 to 15 minutes.
- Discard all ice in ice machines. Clean and sanitize the interior surfaces (ice making compartment and storage bin). Run the ice machine process through three cycles and discard ice with each cycle.
- Clean and sanitize all sinks thoroughly before resuming use.
- Inspect equipment to be sure it is operational and that all aspects of its integrity are maintained.
- Stove units should be thoroughly cleaned and checked by the fire department, local utility company, or authorized service representative prior to use.

### **Maintaining Food Temperatures**

- Verify that all open-top refrigerated and freezer display cases, walk-in refrigerators, and walk-in freezers are capable of consistently maintaining cold holding temperatures ( $\leq 41^{\circ}\text{F}$  or in a frozen state) before food items are placed in the units.
- Ensure that heating equipment can heat to the appropriate cooking temperature ( $\geq 135^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) for raw animal foods. Ensure that cooling equipment can maintain foods at the appropriate ( $\leq 41^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) temperature.
- Verify that all equipment used for food preparation (e.g., cooking, cooling, and reheating) is functioning and properly calibrated prior to use.

### **Food Source and Receipt**

- All foods, including raw, fresh, frozen, pre-packaged, shelf-stable, and ready-to-eat foods must only be received from an approved food source.
- The edible portion of fresh produce that has come in contact with floodwaters is considered adulterated and must be discarded.
- Food should be received by a person who is responsible for ensuring that food packages meet temperature requirements and are intact with no breaks, seams, or other openings. Canned foods must not be swollen or have any dents or punctures in the cans or soiled labels.
- Foods requiring temperature control must be received in a frozen state or at a temperature of  $41^{\circ}\text{F}$  or lower for refrigerated storage.

### **Pest Control**

- Ensure that any rodents/pests that may have entered the facility are no longer present. Remove dead pests and sanitize any food-contact surfaces that have come in contact with pests.
- Seal all openings into the facility to prevent future entry of pests or rodents.
- Dispose of contaminated or spoiled solid foods in closed containers for removal to prevent rodent and fly harborage.

### **Employees**

- Always use soap and potable running warm water (at least  $100^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) to wash hands.
- Alcohol hand gels may only be used after handwashing. Alcohol hand gels are ineffective against germs on soiled hands and are not a substitute for soap and proper handwashing with water and soap.
- Employees must not touch ready-to-eat foods with their bare hands, but instead must use tongs, deli paper, or single-use disposable gloves.
- Employees with open wounds must not work with hands-on preparation of foods or with cleaned and sanitized food contact surfaces or single-service/single-use utensils. If infected wounds are covered with a double, water-proof barrier such as a finger cot or water-tight bandage and plastic gloves, the employee may continue to work with food.
- Employees sick with vomiting, diarrhea or jaundice must not be at work, and should not return to work until at least 48 hours after symptoms cease.
- Employees in soiled clothing from flood clean-up are not allowed to conduct food activities until changing into clean clothing.

### **Questions?**

Contact El Paso County Public Health - Environmental Health Division at 719.578.3199 M-F 7:30 am - 4:30 pm, or by email at <http://www.elpasocountyhealth.org/report-public-health-concern>.