



Post Flood – Food Premises Information

This fact sheet has been prepared to provide guidance on how to manage a business following a flood event.

The sale of safe and suitable food for human consumption following a disaster is imperative for public health and Council will provide assessment and guidance for the clean-up of food outlets to assure safe food operations.

After flood waters recede, Council will inspect licensable food premises and catering establishments, taking steps to ensure that food that has been adversely affected is not available for sale.

Businesses are not to resume their activities until the necessary conditions for safe food production or preparation are met, including when the premises used for food production or preparation have been cleaned and disinfected, electricity, water supplies and sanitation have been restored, equipment is operating and properly trained staff are available.

If a product cannot be chemically or heat treated it should be disposed of, as disinfection cannot be guaranteed.

Items to consider when returning to flood affected food businesses and during the clean-up process are as follows:

Physically Damaged Items

All packaging that has been punctured, torn, swollen, rusted or had its security seal removed/damaged is required to be disposed of.

Vermin/Insects/Pest Damaged Items

All items that have been affected by vermin, insects or any other pests are required to be disposed of.



Flood/Water Damaged Items

All items that have been subjected to floodwaters should be inspected before use. Items that can be salvaged (eg canned goods and products that are shelf stable products in hermetically sealed packages) require the exterior of packaging to be cleaned and sanitised prior to consumption to eliminate any risk of any pathogenic micro-organisms from contaminating the food product when opened. Remove labels from cans prior to cleaning and identify food. All other items are to be disposed of.

Dry Goods Storage

All items stored in dry storage should be free from any damage that may have contaminated the food item or show any evidence of tampering or damage from vermin, insects and other pests.

Refrigeration / Freezer Storage

In the event of a power failure, ensure all refrigerated items are maintained at a temperature below 5°C. If the power has been out for an extended period of time, food should be disposed of.

Building and Equipment Integrity

The impact of flood waters on the building's structure, such as food storage areas needs to be protected from outside elements such as rain, water, dust, pests, animals and any other condition that may adversely affect the safety of the food product.

Wall cavities, cavities behind kickboards and other structural voids that have been subject to inundation should be drained and cleaned. In the case of wall cavities, holes drilled near the base to check for water inundation can indicate whether further action is required.

The integrity of laminated surfaces needs to be checked. Water permeation of the timber may cause buckling or separation rendering the laminated material impossible to disinfect.

Wall cavities of cool/freezer rooms should be checked for water inundation. Holes can be drilled into the wall, which will indicate the extent of water infiltration. If given a few weeks to dry and certification is granted by a qualified refrigeration expert that the integrity of the structure is sound and the walls are sealed, then approval for reuse should be given.

To ensure safe operation, an electrician should check all electrical equipment that has been inundated by floodwaters.

Soft plastic and porous items such as wood items that probably absorbed flood waters should be thrown out.

Disinfection

In the event of a flood, it is expected that water will have mixed with overflowing sewers. Therefore, the following steps should be taken to clean and disinfect food contact surfaces and equipment:

- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment such as safety glasses and disposable gloves.
- Wash item/equipment/structure with detergent and warm water.
- Rinse surface.
- Apply bleach as needed according to the following table:

Walls, Floors and Ceiling			
Water	4% Chlorine (household bleach)	12.5% Chlorine	65% Chlorine
5L	125mL	50mL	4g (hypochlorite granules)
10L	250mL	100mL	8g
50L	1250mL	500mL	40g

Food Contact Surfaces and Equipment			
Water	4% Chlorine (household bleach)	12.5% Chlorine	65% Chlorine
5L	25mL	10mL	0.8g (hypochlorite granules)
10L	50mL	20mL	1.6g
50L	250mL	100mL	8g

- Leave sanitiser (bleach) for 10 minutes and then rinse.
- Alternatively for all utensils or equipment, place in a dishwasher with water temperature at 82°C for 2 minutes.
- Ensure all usable food items are cleaned and sanitised prior to use.



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