

FLOODWATCH TIPS

Flood Information for Food Premises

The best way to minimize flood damage is to take precautions ahead of time, especially if your business is located in a flood-prone area. It is important to remember that floodwaters are very dirty and items in contact with floodwaters should be handled properly. Flooding may result in the loss of power, loss of a safe water supply and cause sewer back-ups.

Operators need to develop an emergency response plan to anticipate problems and possible solutions to help protect their facility, and reduce damage to their equipment, inventory and operation. This contingency planning will help operators speed up their recovery after the flood.

Food Premises that have been impacted by the effects of flooding cannot operate until authorized to do so by a Public Health Inspector

PREPARING FOR A FLOOD

Reduce inventory of supplies to minimal levels in order to reduce losses.

Equipment and Supplies

Move as much of your inventory as possible to a secure area above the anticipated flood level or to an off site location:

- Inventory for the premises
- Operational documents
- Chemicals such as pesticides, cleaning agents and sanitizers
- Furnishings such as chairs, tables and carpets
- Electronic equipment such as computers and cash registers
- Moveable equipment such as utensils and appliances

What to do with your utilities?

- Take special precautions to safeguard electrical, natural gas or propane heating equipment. If there is time, consult your supplier for instructions.
- Turn off the furnace, the outside natural gas valve and the electricity. Know how to do this properly and safely. Call Terasen Gas, BC Hydro or an electrician if you need help.

AFTER THE FLOOD

It is important to remember:

- Floodwaters are likely to be polluted with sewage and other contaminants; they are a threat to the health of everyone in a flooded area.
- Proper cleanup is important.
- Restore your facility as soon as possible to minimize further damage.
- Wear personal protective equipment such as a face mask, gloves and rubber boots.
- You should not enter a damaged building until having it assessed for hazards.

Before Re-entering your Food Premises

- Return to your facility when notified by the local emergency operations center.
- Check your building for structural safety before entering.
- Call your municipal engineering or building department for an inspection before re-entering or follow directions from the local emergency operations center.
- Call BC Hydro or have an electrician inspect and check for electrical hazards before you re-enter your facility, especially if the electricity was not shut off before evacuation.
- If you smell gas or suspect a leak, leave immediately. Call Terasen Gas or the local Fire Department. Do not re-enter until you are told it is safe to do so.
- If your food premises receives well water or uses an on-site sewage disposal system, please refer to "Private Drinking Water Supplies: What to Do After a Flood", "Disinfection of a Well After Flooding", and "Flood Information Regarding On-Site Sewage Disposal Systems" from Fraser Health.

Re-entering your facility

- Avoid wading in standing water as it may contain unseen hazards.
- Do not turn on the main gas valve. The main gas valve must be turned on by a licensed gas service technician.
- Do not use flooded appliances (gas/electric), electrical outlets, switch boxes or fuse-breaker panels until your local utility or other qualified personnel have checked them.
- Do not use gas or electrical heating systems until they have been thoroughly inspected by a qualified technician.
- Do not use any equipment used in the operation unless directed by the manufacturer, or a qualified service technician that it can be cleaned and sanitized and put back into operation.

Cleaning and Sanitizing your Establishment and Equipment.

The basic steps to cleaning up after a flood are: remove standing water, remove mud, tear out any walls if needed, clean up and disinfect. The physical structure should be dried quickly in order to minimize the growth of bacteria and mould. You should not clean your premises until you have a safe supply of water and a functioning waste disposal system.

"Consider hiring a professional restoration company"

(a) Physical facility*Interior surfaces (floors, walls, ceilings)*

- Remove all water, mud and other debris.
- Break out walls and remove drywall, wood panelling and insulation at least 50 cm (20 inches) above the high water line.
- Before cleaning floors, remove and discard flooded soak carpets and underlay.
- Wash using soap and water, rinse and sanitize all surfaces.
- Sanitize using a chlorine solution. Mix by adding 1 litre (4 cups) of household bleach to 25 litres (5 gallons) of water, or use a commercial sanitizer.
- Increase ventilation and decrease humidity by opening windows and doors.

Pest control

- Remove any pests. Wash and sanitize surfaces that they may have contaminated.
- Seal all openings into the facility to prevent entry of pests.

Exhaust systems, hoods, HVAC systems (submerged in floodwater)

- Remove any debris. Clean and sanitize. Ventilation systems that cannot be cleaned and sanitized should be removed and replaced.

(b) Equipment

All equipment and appliances should be inspected by a qualified technician to ensure they are operational. Always use extreme caution when restarting equipment with electrical components.

Sanitize equipment and food contact surfaces using chlorine bleach at a concentration of 100-200 ppm (1 tablespoon bleach in 1 gallon of water) or another approved sanitizer.

Equipment with waterlines (post-mix and beverage machines, coffee/tea urns, ice machine, glass washer, dishwasher and other equipment with water connections)

- Replace all ice machine filters and beverage dispenser filters and flush all waterlines, including steam water lines and ice machine water lines for 10-15 minutes.
- Flush, wash and sanitize faucet screens and waterline strainers.
- Purge fixtures of any standing water.
- Clean and sanitize all fixtures, sinks and equipment.

Dishwasher

- Before use, run the empty dishwasher through the wash-rinse-sanitize cycle three times (to flush the water lines and ensure the machine is sanitized internally).

Utensils, ceramic dishes, metal pots:

- Wash and rinse all dishes, pots and utensils to remove mud and debris.
- Wash, rinse and sanitize using a dishwasher or 3 compartment sink method.
- Sanitize by submerging in boiling water for 10 minutes.



Refrigeration equipment

- Wash, rinse and sanitize the interior and exterior.
- Equipment should be inspected by a qualified technician before placing in use.
- Ensure equipment can maintain a temperature of less than 4°C.

Ice machine

- Clean and sanitize the interior surfaces (ice making compartment/storage bin)
- Run the ice through 3 cycles and discard ice with each cycle.

(c) Food Products

Very few food or beverage items can be saved after being exposed to flood water. In some cases, canned goods in metal cans or rigid plastic containers can be saved but cannot be resold if the label is detached.

What to Keep or Discard

Discard:

All food and packaging materials exposed to flood water such as:

- The contents of refrigerators and freezers.
- Food that is not in a waterproof container.
- Cans that are dented, leaking, bulging or rusted.
- Food in containers with screw-caps, snap-lids, crimped-caps, pull-tops (including liquor).
- Refrigerated foods that were not exposed to flood water, but reached a temperature above 4°C.

Anything that has been contaminated by floodwater must be thrown out such as:

- Plastic knives, forks and spoons, stir sticks, drinking straws.
- Take-out food and beverage containers (pizza boxes, styrofoam containers, cups).
- Upholstered furniture (chairs, bar stools, benches).
- Books and paper (including paper napkins).
- Tables or booths that cannot be cleaned and sanitized.

Keep:

- Undamaged, commercially prepared foods in all metal cans and retort pouches.
- Packaged, non-potentially hazardous foods that were not exposed to flood water.
- Refrigerated foods that were not exposed to flood water and remained below 4°C

“IF IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT”