

Small Fires in Food Premises

What food premises operators need to know

Small fires that are confined to a specific area of a food premises or to a piece of equipment can usually be extinguished using a hand held fire extinguisher. These types of fires do not usually cause extensive damage but, food and equipment may become contaminated by smoke, fumes, water and chemicals. Therefore if you have experienced a small fire you must take action to ensure that food is safe to eat and that the premises can operate in a safe and sanitary manner.



➤ **What actions should you take?**

The following is a list of actions you must take if a small fire has occurred in your business:

- Assess the extent of damage and make necessary repairs.
- Clean and sanitize all contaminated surfaces thoroughly.
- Throw out contaminated food.

In some cases you will need to close your business. For example, if the fire has caused damage to critical pieces of equipment such as coolers or if electrical services are unavailable. If you have closed your business contact your Environmental Health Officer; you must obtain approval before reopening.

Use the checklist on page 2 to help you assess the damage caused by a small fire. This checklist is not intended to cover all possible hazardous conditions that may exist. Contact your Environmental Health Officer if you need additional information.

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Checklist to assess fire damage

You do not need to submit this checklist to your Environmental Health Officer.

Check the following	Yes	No	Take this action
<p>Utilities</p> <p>Are all of the following services in working order?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Electricity ▪ Hot and cold running water ▪ Sewage disposal 	<p>Yes</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>No</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>If No, close your business and contact your Environmental Health Officer.</p> <p>If Yes, no action is required.</p>
<p>Refrigeration Equipment</p> <p>Is all refrigeration equipment capable of maintaining food at less than 4°C?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>No</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>If No, close your business and contact your Environmental Health Officer.</p> <p>If Yes, monitor refrigeration temperatures as described in your Food Safety Plan.</p>
<p>Dishwashing Equipment</p> <p>Can you wash and sanitize dishes?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>No</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>If No, close your business and contact your Environmental Health Officer.</p> <p>If Yes, no action is required.</p>
<p>Floors, walls, ceiling</p> <p>Is there structural damage to the interior of the building or have these surfaces been contaminated by water, debris, smoke and/or chemicals?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>No</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>If No, no action is required.</p> <p>If Yes, repair the damage; clean all surfaces thoroughly.</p>
<p>Lighting</p> <p>Has the lighting been damaged?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>No</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>If No, no action is required.</p> <p>If Yes, repair or replace damaged lighting.</p>
<p>Equipment</p> <p>Is equipment damaged and/or contaminated by water, debris, smoke and/or chemicals? Note: It is your responsibility to ensure that equipment is operating according to the manufacturer’s specifications.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>No</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>If No, no action is required.</p> <p>If Yes, repair or replace damaged equipment; clean all surfaces thoroughly.</p>
<p>Food Contact Surfaces</p> <p>Are surfaces contaminated with water, debris, smoke and/or chemicals?</p> <p>This includes cutting boards, table tops, dishes, utensils, blenders and containers used to store bulk foods.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>No</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>If No, no action is required.</p> <p>If Yes, clean all surfaces thoroughly; food contact surfaces must also be sanitized.</p>
<p>Single use items</p> <p>Are items contaminated with water, debris, smoke and/or chemicals?</p> <p>This includes items such as take out containers, disposable cutlery, individual sugar packages, paper towels, disposable trays and pizza boxes.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>No</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>If No, no action is required.</p> <p>If Yes, throw out contaminated items.</p>
<p>Food</p> <p>Has food been contaminated?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>No</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>If No, no action is required.</p> <p>If Yes, throw out damaged and/or contaminated foods.</p>

➤ **How do I identify contaminated foods?**

You can easily identify contaminated foods if they are visibly damaged. The food or packages and containers of food will be:

- Damaged by heat (burnt or charred).
- Covered with:
 - Smoke residue.
 - Water or chemicals used to fight the fire.
 - Other contaminants such as ash and debris.

In some cases contaminated foods are difficult to identify as the food or packages do not appear damaged. This includes foods that have been exposed to smoke and fumes, damaged only by heat or foods that have absorbed odours. Sealed paper or plastic bags and cardboard boxes do not protect food from smoke and fumes and foods in these packages may be contaminated. Although canned foods are protected from smoke and fumes the contents may be damaged by heat from the fire.

Generally a small fire will only damage or contaminate foods that are stored in the immediate area of the fire.

➤ **What foods must be thrown out?**

All contaminated foods must be thrown out. Use the following checklist to help you assess the damage caused by the fire. The checklist is not intended to cover all possible conditions. If you are unsure about the safety of any food, throw it out and contact your local Environmental Health Officer for more information.

Checklist to assess food contamination

You do not need to submit this checklist to your Environmental Health Officer.

Check the following	Yes	No	Take this action
Are foods or packages of food visibly damaged or contaminated with water and chemicals, smoke, ash or debris?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If Yes, throw out all damaged and contaminated foods and packages of food. Note: Foods in sealed cans or jars may be salvaged if exposed to smoke only (no heat damage).
Were foods and packages of food that appear undamaged exposed to smoke and fumes from the fire?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If Yes, throw out. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Foods stored in paper bags, cardboard, plastic or cellophane wrappers (flour, pasta, bread). ▪ Foods in plastic containers and bottles (mustard, soft drinks). ▪ Individually portioned foods (sugar, jam). ▪ Foods that were uncovered including food in display cases (baked foods and produce). ▪ Refrigerated foods if the door seals were not tight. ▪ Foods that absorb odours easily such as dairy, meat and fish.
Were foods stored at 4°C or greater for more than two hours?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If Yes, throw out these foods.
Were canned foods exposed to heat from the fire?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If Yes, throw out these foods.

You should consider keeping a list of foods you have thrown out for insurance purposes.

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➤ What foods may be salvaged?

Foods stored in water proof/airtight packages may be salvaged if they have only been exposed to smoke or fumes. This includes:

- Canned food (food in sealed metal cans or glass jars).
- Soft drinks in metal cans.

The container must be cleaned and sanitized before opening and using the food. The minimum requirements outlined in your Food Safety Plan and Sanitation Plan must be followed.

If you are unsure about the safety of any food, throw it out or contact your Environmental Health Officer for more information.

➤ Health Protection Offices

Abbotsford (*Abbotsford, Aldergrove, Clayburn, Clearbrook, Matsqui & Mt. Lehman*)
207 – 2776 Bourquin Crescent West
Abbotsford, BC V2S 6A4
Telephone: (604) 870-7900

Chilliwack (*Agassiz, Chilliwack, Columbia Valley, Cultus Lake, Greendale, Harrison Hot Springs, Harrison Mills, Rosedale, Sardis & Yarrow*)
45470 Menholm Road
Chilliwack, BC V2P 1M2
Telephone: (604) 702-4950

Langley (*Fort Langley, Langley City & Langley Township*)
Langley Memorial Hospital
22051 Fraser Highway
Langley, BC V3A 4H4
Telephone: (604) 514-6121

New Westminster
218 – 610 Sixth Street
New Westminster, BC V3L 3C2
Telephone: (604) 777-6740

Surrey (*Cloverdale & Surrey*)
Suite 100, 13450 – 102nd Avenue
Surrey, BC V3T 5X3
Telephone: (604) 930-5405

Burnaby
300 – 4946 Canada Way
Burnaby, BC V5G 4H7
Telephone: (604) 918-7683

Delta (*Delta, Tsawwassen & White Rock*)
201 – 11245 84th Avenue
Delta, BC V4C 2L9
Telephone: (604) 507-5478

Mission (*Deroche, Dewdney, Hatzic Lake, Lake Erroch & Mission*)
7298 Hurd Street
Mission, BC V2V 3H5
Telephone: (604) 814-5515

Ridge Meadows (*Maple Ridge & Pitt Meadows*)
400 – 22470 Dewdney Trunk Road
Maple Ridge, BC V2X 5Z6
Telephone: (604) 476-7000

Tri-Cities (*Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, Anmore & Belcarra*)
300 – 205 Newport Drive
Port Moody, BC V3H 5C9
Telephone: (604) 949-7700

For other food related information visit the Fraser Health website at: www.fraserhealth.ca/foodsafety