

# Reopening Your Food Establishment after Flooding

## Inspection

It is the responsibility of the Manager or operator to conduct a complete self-inspection to ensure that normal operations can be resumed safely and without compromising food safety.

## Sanitizing

Proper decontamination will eliminate harmful microorganisms, chemical residues, or filth that could pose a food safety risk. Decontamination and sanitization procedures using chemical sanitization should be used on equipment and structural surfaces that are salvageable. Chemical sanitizers include:

- ❖ chlorine bleach at a concentration of 100 - 200 ppm (approximately one tablespoon of bleach in one gallon of potable water), or
- ❖ quaternary ammonium at a concentration of 200 ppm, or
- ❖ other approved sanitizers

## Damaged Food Products

- Discard and remove all food and packaging materials that may have been submerged in floodwaters or affected by moisture, unless the food is sealed in a hermetically sealed container that has not been damaged.
- Destroy refrigerated and frozen foods which have completely thawed or have spent an unknown amount of time in refrigerators without power. **If in doubt, throw it out.**
- Inspect canned foods and discard any food in damaged cans.
- Do not keep products in containers with screw-caps, snap-lids, crimped-caps (soda pop bottles), twist-caps, flip-tops, snap-opens, and similar type closures that have been submerged in flood waters.
- Do not salvage food packed in plastic, paper, cardboard, cloth, and similar containers that have been water damaged or have absorbed moisture.
- Save undamaged, commercially prepared foods in all-metal cans or retort pouches. If you remove labels that can come off, thoroughly wash the cans, rinse them, and then disinfect them with a sanitizing solution. Re-label containers that had the labels removed, including the expiration date, with a marker.

## Physical Facilities

- If you have a well that has been flooded, ensure it is super-chlorinated (shocked) and tested to confirm it is safe after flood waters recede. Further information on well treatment is available on the [AHS website](#).
- Thoroughly wash all facility interior surfaces (e.g., floors, walls, and ceilings), using potable water, with a hot detergent solution, rinsed free of detergents and residues, and treated with a sanitizing solution.
- Mould contamination is a concern. Structural components of the building (e.g., walls, piping, ceiling, and HVAC system/ventilation systems) affected by flood waters should be cleaned, repaired, and disinfected, where possible.

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- Remove and destroy all absorbent materials (carpet, drywall, etc.) that has been waterdamaged.
- Dry all remaining structural components as quickly as possible. Do not close up any new construction until after the structural components are dry.

### Equipment

- Use a commercial dishwasher or three compartment sink to wash, rinse, and sanitize equipment and utensils, using potable water.
- Run the empty dishwasher through the wash-rinse-sanitize cycle **three** times to flush the water lines and clean and sanitize the dishwasher inside before washing equipment and utensils in it.
- Clear refrigeration units, like coolers and freezers, of all contaminated food products. Clean and sanitize refrigeration units.
- Check insulation of refrigeration units for flood damage.
- Discard equipment that has been damaged beyond repair.
- Thoroughly clean and sanitize all countertops, equipment including ice machines and non-food contact surfaces.
- Thoroughly clean and sanitize all sinks before using them.

### Maintaining Food Temperatures

- Verify that all refrigerated and freezer display cases, walk-in refrigerators, and walk-in freezers are capable of consistently maintaining cold holding temperatures (no warmer than 4°C or keep in a frozen state) before replacement food items are placed in the units.
- Verify that all equipment used for food preparation (e.g., cooking, cooling, and reheating) is functioning properly.

### Pest Control

- Verify that you do not have a pest infestation.

### Employees

- Ensure handwashing basins are operational, stocked with hand soap and paper towels, and accessible.
- Confirm your employee illness procedures with your staff.

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Contact us at 1-833-476-4743 or [submit a request online](#) at [ahs.ca/eph](https://ahs.ca/eph).

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