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
  (1 tablespoon of bleach in 1 gallon of potable water),
- 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 flood waters 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](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca).
- 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.
• Remove and destroy all absorbent materials (carpet, drywall, etc.) that has been water damaged.

**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 sanitized 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 (4°C or 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.

**For more information, please contact your nearest Environmental Public Health office.**

- Edmonton Main Office 780-735-1800
- Calgary Main Office 403-943-2295
- Lethbridge Office 403-388-6689
- Grande Prairie Main Office 780-513-7517
- Red Deer Main Office 403-356-6366
- www.albertahealthservices.ca/eph.asp