



SEWAGE/FLOOD BACKUP GUIDELINES FOR FOOD FACILITIES

These guidelines have been developed to assist food operators during a sewage and/or flood back up in a commercial kitchen. These guidelines are not meant to be inclusive of all local and state requirements but are intended to provide a summary of what to do in such situations. For additional food safety measures, please refer to the California Retail Food Code (CRFC) 2023 version.

DO THIS FIRST!

DECIDE: Stay open or close?

- Stay open - if flooding or sewage back-up (grey water) is contained and it is not an imminent risk to health and safety and it can be quickly corrected (e.g. floor-sink not fully overflowing or slow drain, or mop sink slow draining and not reaching the rim, etc.).
- Close - if any food storage, prep or service area is at risk of contamination, it is an imminent risk to health and safety (e.g. grease trap overflowing, raw sewage effluent overflowing, etc.).

Note: Flood waters and sewage can contain rotting food, feces, chemicals and disease-causing organisms which will contaminate the operation and easily cause food-borne illnesses. If flooding or sewage back-up can not immediately be contained and cleaned up, the facility should be closed until further notice.

GET HELP:

If facility has been flooded:

- Call the city building inspector (to determine safety of structure).
- Call utility companies (to assure safety of gas, electric, and telephone).
- Call a sewage-pumping contractor (if septic tank is flooded).
- Call a well contractor (for disinfection of contaminated well water).
- Call your property insurance company (to file a possible claim).
- Call local health department (for response and clean-up advice).

If sewer has backed up:

- Call a licensed plumber to remove blockages in drain lines.
- Call a sewage-pumping contractor if septic tank is overfilled.
- Call local health department (for response and clean-up advice).

FOOD SAFETY FACTORS

Discard all food that has been in direct contact with flood water or sewage and anything that cannot be washed and disinfected. **WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!**

Discard:

- Foods in porous paper, plastic or cellophane packaging that became wet (e.g. boxes or bags of flour, cereal, mixes, rice, salt).
- Exposed bulk foods, fresh produce, meat, poultry, fish and eggs.
- Containers with screw tops, corks, crowns, caps or pull tabs that became wet (e.g. glass/plastic containers of ketchup, dressings, milk, mayonnaise, sauces, beverages).
- Rusted, pitted, dented, swollen or leaking canned goods.
- Refrigerated or frozen foods that have been over 41°F and hot foods that have been under 135°F for four or more hours.
- Contaminated single-service items.

Salvage:

- All foods not exposed to flood or sewage water
- Undamaged canned goods that have been sanitized
 1. Paper label removed
 2. Washed with soap and water, then rinsed
 3. Sanitized with sanitizing solution, then air dried
 4. Relabeled with permanent marker.

See guidelines below regarding discard/salvage.

RECOVERY

Consult professional companies for clean-up services after a flood or sewage back-up inside a building. If restaurant employees are involved in the clean-up work, the following guidelines are important to protect their safety and health.

- Wear eye protection, rubber boots and gloves and outer protective clothing (coveralls or long-sleeve shirts and long pants) when handling items contaminated with flood or sewer water.
- If mold problems are identified, wear a properly fitted filtration mask that carries the N-95 designation from NIOSH
- Do not walk between contaminated areas and other areas of the establishment without removing protective gloves, footwear and clothing.
- Wash your hands thoroughly after working in the contaminated area.

General cleaning - hard, non-porous surfaces (floors, walls, equipment)

- Remove all sewage, mud, silt or other solids and then remove excess water.
- Use a stiff brush, water, detergent, and disinfectant to scrub floors followed by a clean water rinse. Repeat wash and sanitize steps to prevent mold growth.
- Use fans, heaters, air conditioners or dehumidifiers to help the drying process.
- Clean all hard surfaces (equipment, ice machine, counters, furniture) with hot water and detergent; rinse with water; then disinfect with sanitizing solution.

Wash or discard - linens, mops, apparel (contaminated by event or during clean-up)

- Wash all contaminated items such as linens and clothing used in the clean-up in detergent and hot water.
- Launder or discard mops and any cleaning aids that contacted flood or sewer water.

Discard - porous, soft, absorbent and other uncleanable items

- Discard all damaged food equipment, utensils and linens.
- Discard all soft, porous materials because they are not cleanable, such as:
 - Contaminated drywall, insulation, and paneling.
 - Contaminated furnishings, carpets, pillows, wall coverings, paper.
 - Contaminated books, paperwork, menus.
- Discard any exposed item that cannot be effectively disinfected (e.g., toaster).

READY TO REOPEN?

Call Environmental Health Services at (650) 372-6200 for a pre-opening inspection.

HELPFUL HINTS

Use CAUTION tape to isolate a small flooded or sewage back-up area to keep customers and employees from walking through, getting exposed to, and spreading contamination.

SANITIZING SOLUTION

Use 1 tablespoon of household bleach (without additives) per gallon of water.

DISCARD AND SALVAGE GUIDELINES

DISCARD	SALVAGE
<p>Any food or service item that has been contaminated or come in contact with water, sewage, smoke, fumes or chemicals. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh perishables - produce, meat, poultry, fish, dairy products and eggs. • Opened containers and packages. • Vulnerable containers with peel-off, waxed, cardboard, cork or screw tops or paraffin seals such as glass or plastic containers of ketchup, dressing, milk, horseradish, mayonnaise, pop, beer, sauces, etc. • Soft, porous packaging - food in cardboard boxes, paper, foil, plastic, and cellophane such as boxes or bags of food, cereal, flour, sugar, rice, salt, etc. • Dry goods such as spices, seasoning and extracts, flour, sugar and other staples in canisters. • Single service items - plates, cups, utensils, lids, etc. 	<p>Frozen foods if stored in a sealed walk-in or cabinet freezer (no water, smoke, fumes or chemical infiltration) and where ambient temperature has remained below 41°F.</p>
<p>Canned and bottled items should be discarded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If charred or near the heat of the fire. • If rusted, pitted, dented, swollen or leaking. 	<p>Disinfect undamaged cans and bottles that have no heat or water damage and are free from dents, bulging, leaks or rust.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper label removed • Washed with soap and water, then rinsed • Sanitized with sanitizing solution, then air dried • Relabeled with permanent marker
<p>Refrigerated or frozen food must be discarded if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In contact with sewage, water, smoke, fumes or chemical seepage. • Above 41°F for four hours or more. • Frozen and then thawed for four or more hours. Deteriorated in quality or has an unusual appearance, color or odor 	<p>If fire, flood or sewage back-up has been effectively contained:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food in areas unaffected by smoke, fumes, water, heat, fire suppression chemicals, floodwater or sewage back-up may be salvaged. • Seek the advice of your local health inspector.

<p>Potentially Hazardous Food (PHF) must be discarded if it has been in the "Temperature Danger Zone"(41°F – 135°F) for more than 4 hours. PHFs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meat and meat dishes • Mixed dishes - soups, stews, casseroles or similar dishes containing meats, pasta, rice, eggs or cheeses. • Eggs and dairy products • Soft cheeses such as cream, ricotta, brie, etc. • Desserts - Pies, cakes and pastries containing custard, cheese, chiffon, meringue or pumpkin • Cut Melons & Cooked Vegetables - Watermelon, musk or honeydew melons, cooked peas or corn or beans 	<p>Non-PHF's may be kept at room temperature, though quality may deteriorate, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breads, rolls, muffins, dry cakes • Solid butter or margarine • Hard cheese - cheddar, parmesan, etc. • Fresh, uncut fruits & vegetables • Fruit or vegetable juices, dried fruit, fruit pies • Canned goods • Dry foods - flour, pasta, rice, etc • High sugar foods - honey, jellies • Acid-based condiments - ketchup, mustard
<p>Partially cooked food must be discarded if without power for more than one hour.</p>	<p>Partially cooked food may be quickly reheated to 165°F if without power for less than one hour. When in doubt, throw it out!</p>

OTHER THAN FOOD: DISCARD

Discard any exposed materials that cannot be effectively cleaned and sanitized, including toasters and other food equipment, linens, furnishings, carpets, etc. For discarding electronic appliances please contact your local waste disposal company.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AT (650) 372-6200 OR VISIT US AT: www.smchealth.org/food