



Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

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Randall W. Williams, MD, FACOG
Director

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NOTICE: Guidelines for Food Establishments After a Flood

TO: Food service and retail food establishments located in the state of Missouri.

FROM: The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, Bureau of Environmental Health Services. In the event of a flood the safe storage and handling of food products becomes a serious public health concern. Flood waters contain chemical and biological contaminants which can adulterate foods. As the owner or operator of a food establishment, you are responsible for maintaining your products in a wholesome condition and for proper disposal of adulterated foods.

Prior to reopening following flooding, establishment persons-in-charge (PICs) should conduct a complete establishment inspection to ensure that normal operations can be resumed safely and without compromising food safety. **Establishments required to cease operations in an emergency or those affected by a natural disaster should not re-open until authorization is granted by the local or state regulatory authority.**

You are also responsible for ensuring that temperature-abused, or otherwise adulterated food products are not provided (sold, traded or given) to consumers as their consumption can lead to outbreaks of serious foodborne illnesses.

- Discard all food and packaging materials that have been submerged in flood waters, unless the food is sealed in a hermetically sealed can that has not been damaged. Do not recondition products in containers with screw-caps, snap-lids, crimped-caps (soda pop bottles), twist-caps, flip-top, snap-open, 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. Canned food should be washed, rinsed, sanitized and relabeled.
- Exposed and sensitive foods (e.g. produce) and single service articles stored above flood waters may have been adulterated and should be discarded.
- Thoroughly wash all physical 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.
- Thoroughly wash metal pans, ceramic dishes, and utensils (including can openers) with soap and hot water. Rinse, and then sanitize them by boiling in potable water or immersing them for 15 minutes in a solution of 1 tablespoon of unscented, liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of drinking water or other approved sanitizer. Follow instructions on the sanitizer label for appropriate concentration.
- Thoroughly wash countertops, equipment and non-food contact surfaces with soap and hot water. Rinse, and then sanitize by applying a solution of 1 tablespoon of unscented, liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of drinking water or other approved sanitizer. Allow to air dry.
- If the establishment is served by a well, the water should be disinfected and tested to confirm it is safe after flood waters recede. If you suspect well contamination, contact your local or state health department for specific advice.
- Floods are often accompanied by power outages. See the department guidance for food establishments in power outages.

Remember that this is your responsibility. Health department staff members or our authorized representatives will be conducting checks of establishments to ensure compliance with food code regulations.

Establishment: _____

Received by: _____

Printed name: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Health Department Representative: _____

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