

NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES
FOOD PROTECTION SECTION



EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN
FLOOD AND FOOD OPERATIONS

For single events affecting an individual establishment, the license holder must close and report the incident to the NH Division of Public Health Services, Food Protection Section.

I. ASSESSMENT

In the event of an emergency involving a flood, appropriate food establishment responses must be taken after an assessment of multiple factors including but not limited to:

- The complexity and scope of food operations,
- The duration of the emergency event,
- The impact on other critical infrastructure and services (example: water supply, food, equipment, linens, single service, wastewater disposal, site drainage, building access, indoor air quality), and
- The availability of alternative procedures that can be used to meet the requirements of He-P 2300, the NH Rules for the Sanitary Production and Distribution of Food.

II. RESPONSE

The following are temporary alternative procedures that can be taken to address specific affected food operations after a flood.

Affected Operation

Minor leakage from a water line or incidental water accumulation on a floor. Food, utensils, equipment, clean linens, single service/use items not affected.

Alternative Procedure

- Unaffected areas of the establishment may remain open while repairs/recovery take place. Minimize traffic from flooded areas to unaffected areas.

Flooding inside the building due to the overflow of a body of water, poor surface drainage, a major break in a water line, etc. that affects food, utensils, equipment, clean linens, or single service/use items.

Alternative Procedure

- Discontinue operation. Resume operations only after recovery steps have been completed.

III. RECOVERY

Recover involves the necessary steps for re-opening and returning to normal safe operations.

A food establishment that was ordered or otherwise required to cease operations may not re-open until authorization has been granted by the Division of Public Health Services Food Protection Section.

The licensee will:

- Sort the salvageable from the non-salvageable foods, equipment, utensils, linens, and single service items as quickly as possible.
- Properly dispose of the non-salvageable items.
- Contact the local building department and other appropriate agencies to determine if the building structure is safe and approved for occupancy.
- Provide general clean up while ensuring worker health and safety. Clean and sanitize equipment and utensils.

Personal Health and Safety Considerations for Employees Involved in Clean-up

- Wear eye protection.
- Wear rubber boots that can be washed and sanitized after the event.
- Wear protective clothing such as coveralls.
- Do not allow employees to walk between the affected area and other areas of the establishment without removing footwear and protective clothing.

- Follow OSHA rules for handling detergents, sanitizers, and other chemicals used in the cleaning process.
- Handwashing – Immediately after working with contaminated materials and before engaging in food preparation activities (working with exposed food, clean equipment and utensils, unwrapped single service/ use articles.)
 - Double handwashing: Clean hands and exposed portions of the arms using a cleaning compound in a lavatory that is properly equipped by vigorously rubbing together the surfaces of their lathered hands and arms for a least 20 seconds and thoroughly rinsing with clean water. Repeat.
 - Dry hands using disposable towels.
 - Use a disposable towel to turn off the water to prevent re-contaminating the hands.
 - Follow with a hand sanitizer.
- Have janitorial staff clean and disinfect the lavatory faucets and other portions of the lavatory after use to prevent transferring any contamination to food handlers.

Clean-Up

- All damaged food equipment, utensils, linens, and single service items must be destroyed and properly disposed of.
- Floors, walls, furnishings, carpets, utensils, and equipment damaged beyond salvage must be removed and replaced as necessary.
- Affected walls, floors, and equipment surfaces must be cleaned with soap and water, rinsed, and sanitized. Carpets should be either removed or steam cleaned.
- Remove wet materials. Dispose of any materials that cannot be effectively cleaned and sanitized.
- Remove any standing water.
- Clean and sanitize any utensils and equipment in the affected area.
- Use a detergent solution to clean floors, equipment, and other affected areas followed by a clean water rinse.
- Sanitize the floor and any other affected areas by using a clear water sanitizer solution (8oz bleach per 5 gallons of water = 500 parts per million chlorine solution.)
- Air-dry the affected area.
- Launder and discard mop heads and other cleaning aids that contact floodwater.

- Alternative measure: Hire a janitorial service having expertise in cleaning food establishments exposed to floods.
- Contaminated Food, Linens, Single Service / Use Items
 - Discard any food items (packaged or unpackaged) in contact with floodwater.
 - Launder any linens or uniforms in contact with floodwater.
 - Launder separately from other linens.
 - Use bleach.
 - Use a mechanical dryer.
 - Discard any single service / use items in contact with floodwater.

General Flood Salvage Assessment

Floodwaters may carry silt, raw sewage, oil or chemical waste that can make storm-damaged foods unsafe to eat if packaging is contaminated. Discard any food or food packaging materials that have come into contact with floodwater. Food items in soft packaging or with screw-top lids must be destroyed. In some cases canned goods in metal cans or rigid plastic containers can be saved. Even so, the condition of the can is another limiting factor. The presence of rust, soil, or destroyed labeling precludes salvage.

Floodwater can make foods unsafe to eat especially if packaging is contaminated. **Discard** the following foods if water has covered, splashed, dripped on or seeped into the package:

- Alcoholic beverages.
- Exposed foods, bulk foods, fresh produce, meat, poultry, fish and eggs;
- Any foods packaged in paper, plastic, cloth, or fiber;
- Cardboard boxes, even if the contents seem dry, including cereals, pasta products, rice, salt;
- Foods with cardboard seals, such as mayonnaise and salad dressing, or foil or cellophane packages;
- Food in glass jars, including unopened jars with waxed paper, foil, cellophane or cloth covers;
- Foods, liquids or beverages in crown-capped bottles or containers with pull-tab tops, corks or screw caps;
- All opened containers and packages; foods in bags or canisters;
- Cans that are dented, leaking, bulging or rusted; and
- Cans that have been tossed about and are far from their normal storage spot (possibility of pinholes or seam fractures).

- Cans may not be sold without all required labeling information. Therefore, cans with damaged labels should be discarded.

Salvaged Goods – Reconditioning

If quantities of food involved are large (e.g. a large supermarket or a food warehouse), it may be feasible to attempt salvage for either human or animal consumption. There are, however, no approved re-conditioners of distressed goods in New Hampshire. They must either be destroyed or moved out of state under seizure to approved firms that have reconditioning capability. Such movement should be coordinated with the US Food and Drug Administration and other states' officials.

Disposal of Food

If it is determined that food must be discarded:

- Remove to a designated storage area for condemned food away from food preparation and equipment storage and secured in covered refuse containers or other isolated areas to prevent either service to the public or accidental contamination of the facility and other food.
- If the food must be retained until the distributor can credit the facility, it must be clearly labeled as “NOT FOR SALE”.
- Discarded perishable food may be stored in a refrigerated location separate from other food and held for credit until recorded by food supplier/distributor.
- The facility should document the type and amount of food, costs and the reason for disposal for insurance regulatory purposes.
- Small volumes of food to be discarded can be denatured with a cleaning product (such as bleach) and placed in a covered refuse bin outside the facility.
- Large volumes of food should be stored in covered refuse containers in a secure location and disposed of by a refuse disposal company as soon as possible.
- All food waste is to be disposed of in accordance with state and local waste disposal regulations.