

## Flood Response for Food Businesses

Use this checklist as a guide to assess, repair, and clean your facility after a flood.

In the event of a flood:

- **Stop all food operations** if there was any flooding inside of the building that affects food, utensils, equipment, food preparation areas, or otherwise disrupts regular food service.
- **Notify the Food Safety Program immediately** so we can provide support. You can reach out to your health inspector, or call us directly at **206-263-9566** (Seattle – Chinook Office) or **206-477-8050** (Bellevue – Eastgate Office).
- **Do not reopen for business until you have been approved by the health department to do so.**

### Damaged Food Products

**When in doubt, throw it out!** Food must be in sound condition, free from spoilage, temperature abuse, filth, or contamination to be fit for human consumption. **DISCARD** any fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as any foods splashed or submerged in water (this includes foods in permeable packaging (paper, cardboard, etc.) and bottles that are closed with a screw-top, cork, crimped-cap, twist cap, etc. Make sure food is discarded in accordance with local rules and ordinances. Submerged or splashed hermetically sealed containers (canned food, for example) *may* be salvageable, if container is not damaged, dented, rusted or bulging. Cans must be washed, rinsed, and sanitized (50-200ppm chlorine) and dried, and must be relabeled with all required information and codes.

### Physical Facilities

**BEFORE CLEANING:** Your water supply may have been affected by the flooding. Make sure your water supply is safe before you begin cleaning the food establishment.

PHYSICAL FACILITIES	
Area affected by flood water	Instructions
Interior surfaces (e.g. floors, walls, and ceilings)	Thoroughly wash using a hot detergent solution made from a safe water source. Rinse all surfaces so they are free of detergents and residues, and treat them with a sanitizing solution.
Equipment, lighting, drainage areas, ventilation vents, corners, cracks and crevices, door handles, and door gaskets	Thoroughly wash inside and outside with a hot detergent solution, and rinse free of detergents and residues. Treat all clean surfaces with an adequate sanitizing solution (see above for directions).
Structural components of the building (e.g., walls, piping, ceiling, and HVAC system/ventilation systems)	Clean, repair, and disinfect. Avoid mold contamination. All water-damaged wallboard must be removed and destroyed. Cement and concrete walls with mold damage may be able to be reconditioned.
Exhaust system and hoods	Thoroughly clean and free from any debris. Consult professional service technicians, as needed. Water-damaged ventilation systems that cannot be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized should be removed and replaced. In all cases, replace all ventilation air filters.

### Disinfection and Sanitation

After washing and rinsing affected areas, use approved chemical sanitizers, e.g., non-scented chlorine bleach at

a concentration of 2400 parts per million on equipment and structural surfaces that have been contaminated with flood waters.

**Secondary cleaning and sanitation of food contact surfaces:** Perform an additional wash, rinse, sanitize step on all food contact surfaces and equipment using appropriate sanitizer concentrations. For chlorine use 50-200ppm.

Bleach Guidance (8.25%) for Sanitizing and Disinfection of Surfaces			
Purpose	PPM	Dilution	Contact Time
Post -flood <b>disinfection</b>	2400	½ cup bleach/ 1 gallon water*	<b>5 minutes</b>
Food contact surface sanitizer	50-200	1 teaspoon bleach/ 1 gallon water*	<b>2 minutes</b>

*\*Dilution instructions are based on EPA Registration Number 5813-100 labeled instructions for use of Clorox Regular Bleach (8.25% Sodium Hypochlorite). If a different type of bleach is used, the labeled instructions for sanitizing food contact surfaces and routine disinfection should be followed. Splashless and scented bleach should not be used.*

### Equipment Startup Checklist

OTHER EQUIPMENT	
Equipment Affected by Flood water	Instructions
Water Filter System	Clean and sanitize water filter housing. Prior to startup of equipment, all filters must be removed and replaced before system is put back in service. If water filter is designed to be cleaned in place, follow sanitation procedures recommended by your water filter manufacturer and/or equipment service representative.
Mechanical Dishwasher	Run empty dishwasher through wash-rinse-sanitize cycle three times to flush water lines before using it to clean equipment and utensils.
Sinks	Thoroughly clean and sanitize all sinks before resuming use.
Ice Makers	Run three complete ice making cycles and discard all ice made. Clean and sanitize the icemaker bin.
Fountain Dispensers	Run each beverage valve on dispensers for at least four minutes. Remove, clean, and sanitize dispensing nozzles and associated removable parts.
Frozen Beverage Dispensers	Clean and sanitize the ice bin, if present.
Juice Machines	Flush water through the unit for at least five minutes on first flavor, and flush water through any additional flavor on same unit for at least one minute. Call for service and follow equipment manufacturer’s recommendations for cleaning and sanitization.

**Additional guidance if power/water supply is affected at your restaurant:**

- [What to do when the power goes out](#)
- [What to do when you are issued a Boil Water Order](#)