

Food premises affected by flooding

The sale of safe and suitable food for human consumption following a disaster is imperative for public health and Council will provide guidance and assessment for the clean up of food premises to assure safe food operations and compliance with the *Food Act 2006*. An Environmental Health Officer will also inspect your food premises prior to reopening to ensure it meets the requirements for safe food production.

If flooding occurs in your food premises, the following steps must be taken:

Food safety

- Check refrigeration and freezer units to ensure that they are still operating and ensure doors are kept closed to maintain temperatures.
- If the refrigeration equipment is not operational, potentially hazardous foods must be moved to a working unit. If frozen food has defrosted or thawed, it can be refrigerated.
- If there is no refrigeration, initiate the 2 hour/4 hour rule and record action taken. Any food out of temperature control for 4 hours or more must be discarded.
- Any food that comes into direct contact with flood water must be discarded. This includes food stored in sealed cans or bottles, packaged goods and unsealed containers.
- Any exposed food within the premises must be discarded.
- All items that have been affected by vermin, insects or any other pests must be discarded.
- All packaging that is punctured, torn, swollen, rusted or had its security seal removed or damaged must be discarded.

Cooking at risk food will not eliminate the risk of food borne illness. At risk foods, are food items that have been stored between 5°C and 60°C for more than 4 hours. As some bacteria multiply, they produce a toxin, which is not destroyed at the temperature used to cook or reheat food.

Clean up post flood

In the event of a flood, it is very common for water to have mixed with overflowing sewers. The following steps should be taken to clean and sanitise the premises including all surfaces, equipment and food related items prior to reopening:

- Wear protective equipment such as safety glasses, face mask, disposable gloves and enclosed shoes.
- Wash all items, equipment and structures with detergent and hot water, then rinse thoroughly.
- Apply bleach as needed according to the tables below. Do not be dilute chlorine in hot water.

Walls, floors, ceiling

Water	4% Chlorine (household bleach)	12.5% Chlorine	65% Chlorine (hypochlorite granules)
5L	125mL	50mL	4g
10L	250mL	100mL	8g
50L	1250mL	500mL	40g

Food contact surfaces, equipment

Water	4% Chlorine (household bleach)	12.5% Chlorine	65% Chlorine (hypochlorite granules)
5L	25mL	10mL	0.8g
10L	50mL	20mL	1.6g
50L	250mL	100mL	8g

- Leave bleach or chlorine on for 10 minutes and then rinse again.
- Alternatively for all equipment and utensils, place in a dishwasher with water temperature at 82°C for 2 minutes.



Building and equipment integrity

The structure of the building and equipment used must be inspected to determine whether it will meet the requirements of the *Food Act 2006*. It is recommended you check:

- The impact of flood waters on the buildings structure. Food storage areas need to be protected from outside elements such as rain, water, dust, pests, animals and any other condition that may adversely affect the safety of the product.
- Cavities behind walls, kickboards and other structural voids that have been inundated by the flood must be drained and cleaned. In the case of wall cavities, holes drilled near the base to check for water inundation, can indicate whether further action is required.
- The integrity of laminated surfaces must be checked. Water permeation of the timber may cause buckling or separation, which means the laminated material, can not be disinfected properly.
- Wall cavities of cool/freezer rooms must also be checked for water inundation. Holes drilled into the wall, can indicate the extent of water inundation. Approval for reuse may be given if certification is granted by a qualified refrigeration contractor that the integrity of the structure is sound and the walls are fully sealed.
- The integrity of equipment such as fridges, ovens etc must be checked to determine whether it is suitable for the safe storage or production of food. To ensure safe operation, a qualified electrical contractor should check all electrical equipment that has been inundated by flooding.
- Soft plastic and porous items such as wooden spoons and chopping boards that probably absorbed flood water must be discarded.



Council inspection

After a flood has occurred, all food premises will be inspected by an Environmental Health Officer prior to reopening. They will contact you, or alternatively, you can call Council and ask to speak to the Environment and Public Health Unit.

- The Environmental Health Officer will ensure that food that has been adversely affected is not available for sale and that the premises and equipment are suitable for the safe storage and production of food.
- Food premises must not resume operations until they have been inspected and approved by an Environmental Health Officer. As the owner/ operator of a food premises, you must comply with all requirements of Council's inspection before an approval will be granted.
- Council can provide you with information for your insurance company detailing what we made you discard and what we made you repair at your premises.
- It is recommended that you retain all receipts related to cleaning products and services, structural repairs, disposal of waste and any relevant information provided by Council for your insurance claim.
- Council is not liable for any costs incurred for the premises to ensure compliance with the Food Act 2006 and will not be involved in individual insurance claims.

For more information contact Council's Customer Service Centre or visit our website.

Contact us

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Environment and Public Health Unit

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Connect with Council
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