Food Safety After a Storm:
Information for Food Service Establishments

Plan Ahead
• Check refrigeration and freezers for working thermometers
• Store canned food and single service on higher shelves to avoid flood waters
• Freeze any food that is not immediately needed before a big storm

When to Close
• No electricity and/or water
• Insufficient water pressure for cleaning and/or handwashing
• Wastewater back-up or damage to septic system
• Damage to walls or roof that cause potential for food contamination
• Flood waters present inside food establishment

Cleaning up
• When in doubt, THROW IT OUT
• Clean and sanitize utensils, equipment, and food contact surfaces
• Discard food or single service utensils that contacted flood water
• Check food temperatures and discard time/temperature control for safety (TCS) foods that have been out of temperature for >4 hours

Questions?
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### Food Safety After a Storm:
**Do’s and Don’ts for Food Service Establishments**

**Do:**
- Plan ahead and stay up-to-date on potential storm emergencies.
- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as long as possible during power outage.
- Voluntarily close if there is a loss of water and/or electricity.
- Thoroughly clean and sanitize equipment, utensils after any flooding or storm damage.
- Discard any TCS foods that have been out of temperature for >4 hours.
- Stay in contact with your local environmental health specialist for guidance.

**Don’t:**
- Rely on sight or smell to determine whether food is safe.
- Taste food that has been contaminated to determine safety.
- Save food that has gotten wet from flood waters unless it is sealed, in a water proof container, and properly handled.
- Use any potentially contaminated water for ice, fountain drinks or washing produce.
- Risk serving food or using utensils that may have been contaminated.
- Donate food that has been temperature abused or otherwise contaminated.

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Food Safety After a Storm:
A Guide for Environmental Health Specialists

Assessing Facilities

- DO NOT ENTER a building that has severe damage, contact local building authorities if there is a question about structure safety
- Avoid walking through flood waters or into areas without adequate lighting
- Check refrigerators and freezers for proper temperature, get voluntary disposal of TCS foods that have been out of temperature
- Check for signs of defrosting and refreezing in freezers (excess ice build-up, moisture on boxes)
- Ensure adequate hot and cold water is available for cleaning and handwashing
- Discuss cleaning/sanitizing procedures and make sure all food contact surfaces and utensils are sanitized if there is flooding or damage
- Make sure all ice machines and automatic beverage dispensers are emptied and sanitized if water interruption or contamination occurred
- Assess storage rooms for damaged packaged foods or single service

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