

# **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**

### Questions?

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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**

## Questions?

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