

## Flood Information for Food Businesses

### Public Health

If your food business has been flooded there could be a serious risk to public health from infection and food contamination. Do not prepare any food or reopen the establishment until the premises have been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. The flood water may be heavily contaminated with sewerage, harmful bacteria and other pollutants such as oil/petrol etc.

### Help and Advice

The following help and advice will help you get back to normal as quickly as possible after a flood:

- When flood water recedes it may leave a muddy deposit. As well as the distress of clearing up there may be structural damage to your property.
- Always wear rubber gloves to clean surfaces or move objects that have been in contact with the flood water - the water will have been contaminated with sewage and other pollution.
- The Yellow Pages lists details of qualified assistance such as plumbers and electricians as well as suppliers of cleaning materials and equipment. Information can be found under 'flood protection'.
- It may be necessary to contact utility suppliers to reconnect supplies. Don't use electrical circuits or equipment exposed to flood water until checked by a qualified electrician.
- Do not enter any confined spaces, e.g cellars where there is known oil/petrol contamination.
- Do not dispose of damaged goods until your insurers have had a chance to inspect them.
- Very young children should avoid playing directly on timber floorboards or any damaged tiled floors if possible - be aware of the risk of injury from sharp edges on tiles or raised nails in the floorboards until these have been repaired.

### Water Supply

The quality of the mains drinking water to your premises may have been affected. United Utilities will be monitoring the quality of the drinking water. If you have any queries or feel you have cause to be concerned about the quality of your water supply please contact 0845 746 2200 or 0345 672 3723.

Any taps which have been submerged in contaminated flood water should be cleaned using a bleach solution and run for 30 seconds prior to the water being used.

If you are on a private water supply and have been affected by flooding you should assume the supply may have been contaminated and is not fit to use without boiling. Even if you have a treatment method it may be the contamination is heavy (this may not be visible) and the treatment

method may have been unable to cope. Therefore still treat water as contaminated and boil accordingly.

## Cleaning Up

- Do not re-enter your premises until all flood water has been removed. Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service may be able to help you with pumping water out of your house. Please remember others may also need this help so you may have to wait your turn and there is no point pumping out rising water as it will come straight back into the property.
- Ventilate your building after flooding - less damp is less damage.
- Put on protective clothing before starting any clean up. Wash your hands thoroughly after handling anything that may be contaminated and ideally use hot soapy water and liquid antibacterial soap.
- Clean all hard surfaces - food preparation areas, surfaces, equipment, glasses, crockery, food containers, beer-lines and optics - with hot soapy water several times until visually clean, followed by washing down with a food safe disinfectant, (disinfectant or sanitiser that meets British Standard EN 1276:1997 or British Standard EN 13697:2001, this information should be found on the label of the product), adhering to manufacturers' directions. Heavily contaminated items should be disposed of.
- All food that may have been contaminated must be **destroyed**. Initially this must be double bagged and ideally placed in a sealed container to prevent attracting pests.
- Where canned and unopened packaged foods have been in contact with flood water, they should be disposed of.
- Wooden beer casks which have been in contact at all with flood waters must be discarded. Metal beer barrels may be able to be used as long as the flood water has not reached any connected outlet or inlet.
- Advise your suppliers, on returning any contaminated barrels, casks etc, that they have been in contact with flood waters so they can take the necessary precautions.
- If you become ill or suffer any gastric symptoms following the clean up please visit your GP as soon as possible. Nobody should handle or prepare food if they are suffering from gastric illness (i.e diarrhoea, vomiting etc).
- In cases of food loss check with your insurance company. If required we can issue a '**voluntary surrender certificate**' to help with your insurance claim.
- Seek advice from Eden District Council on clearing up if you have any doubts about it.
- Seek professional advice (structural engineer or building control service) if your property is damaged.

## Power Cuts

If you have suffered from power cuts, including for example when electric supplies are cut off on a rolling programme to help conserve energy, you should have regard to the following advice:

- High risk food (such as meat, fish, dairy, egg, rice products etc) must be kept at or below 8°C to prevent the growth of harmful bacteria. Discard any perishable food which has not been kept at fridge temperature.
- If your refrigerators have been without power for more than four hours it is important to immediately chill the food to below 8°C or discard the food if you cannot do so (only one single period of up to four hours out of refrigeration temperature is allowed).
- Provided doors are kept closed food should remain frozen in disconnected freezers for up to 24 hours. If food has defrosted it should be safe if treated as chilled food, refrigerated and used up within a couple of days. If frozen food has risen above 8°C for more than four hours the food should be thrown away.
- Try to avoid opening refrigerator/freezer doors when the power is off. The temperature of an open fridge rises very quickly.
- If you are unable to keep high risk food under adequate temperature control, dispose of it. Further information can be obtained from Environmental Health.

## Electrical Safety

Electrical equipment and installations can pose serious safety risks if they have been damaged by flood water.

- Switch off/isolate electrical installations and equipment if you have not already done so.
- Do not operate equipment which is in water or while you are standing in water.
- Keep away from any live equipment submerged in water.
- Have flood-damaged installations or electrical equipment checked by an approved electrical contractor before use.
- Contact your electricity supplier if you have concerns about the supply.
- Do not use electrical equipment or circuits (e.g. sockets, light switches) that have been flooded until checked and declared safe by a competent electrician.

## Gas Safety

Gas equipment and gas installations can pose safety risks if damaged by flood water.

- If possible turn off the gas control valve.
- Ensure all gas appliances are turned off to minimise the possibility of water getting into the supply pipes.

- It is important to have the appliances inspected by a GAS SAFE registered engineer before being put back into use. The appliances may look and appear to be working normally, but the flue or ventilation systems essential for normal operation may have been adversely affected by floodwater.

### Guidance on Disposal of Waste Food

If your business is a catering operation run from a kitchen then any food which has been flood damaged or in contact with flood water should be disposed of through your normal waste contractor.

### Rodent Infestations

The flood water may have disturbed rodents which could have entered your premises and caused damage to electrical wiring and furniture. If there is a problem, a pest control contractor should be engaged.

### Reopening of a Food Premises

Once your premises are ready to reopen for business, please let us know. We may wish to visit to ensure that food safety (and the health and safety of your staff and customers) can be assured and also to reassure you if you have any further concerns.

### For further information:

- **Contact:** Food, Health and Safety Team
- **Email:** [env.health@eden.gov.uk](mailto:env.health@eden.gov.uk)
- **Telephone:** 01768 212491
- **Fax:** 01768 890732
- **Address:** Environmental Services Section, Mansion House, Penrith, Cumbria CA11 7YG

### Other useful contacts:

Information from [Public Health England](#):

Information from the [Food Standards Agency on food safety](#)