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Steps to follow to prepare for a possible weather emergency

- Make sure the freezer is at 0 °F or below and the refrigerator is at 40 °F or below.
- Freeze containers of water ahead of time for ice to help keep food cold in the freezer, refrigerator, or coolers after the power is out.
- Freeze refrigerated items such as fresh meat and poultry that you may not need immediately — this helps keep them at a safe temperature longer.
- Plan ahead and know where dry ice and block ice can be purchased.
- Group food together in the freezer - this helps the food stay cold longer.
- Store food on shelves that will be safely out of the way of contaminated water in case of flooding.

Steps to follow during a possible weather emergency if the power goes out

- Note the time the power outage begins
- Discontinue cooking operations.
- Discard potentially hazardous foods that were in the cooking or reheating process but did not reach a safe final temperature.
- Evaluate time and temperature to determine if foods out of temperature should be discarded. See USDA/FSIS fact sheet website below for acceptable times and temperatures for safe food.
- Keep refrigeration equipment doors closed; use tape and/or cardboard to insulate and help retain cold temperatures;
- Monitor and record temperatures every 2 hours.
- Do not put hot food in refrigeration equipment
- Pack potentially hazardous food in commercially made ice or dry ice; (Note: Dry ice should not be used in enclosed spaces because of the potential build up of carbon dioxide)
- Limit operation to daylight hours or provide lighting using other power sources.
- Unless hot water is still available at three bay sink, Discontinue operations that generate soiled utensils/tableware.
- If sewage disposal no longer functions discontinue all operations.
- Soap and potable running, warm water (at least 100°F) should always be used to wash hands. Alcohol hand gels may only be used **after handwashing**.

Reopening Restaurants and Grocery Stores After Hurricanes and Flooding

Prior to reopening, establishment persons-in-charge should conduct a complete self-inspection to ensure that normal operations can be resumed safely and without compromising food safety. **Establishments required to cease operations in an emergency or those affected by a natural disaster should not re-open until authorization is granted by the local or state regulatory authority.**

Damaged Food Products

- Discard all food and packaging materials that have been submerged in flood waters, unless the food is sealed in a hermetically sealed can that has not been damaged.

- Destroy refrigerated and frozen foods, such as meat, poultry, shell eggs, egg products, and milk, which have been immersed in flood waters. Good advice is: **If in doubt, throw it out.**
- Complete proper and safe disposal of condemned food items in a manner consistent with federal, state, and local solid waste storage, transportation, and disposal regulations, to ensure these products do not reappear as damaged or salvaged merchandise for human consumption.

Equipment

- All sinks should be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized before resuming use.
- Thoroughly wash, rinse and sanitize all equipment, metal pans, ceramic dishes, and utensils (including can openers) using a dishwasher or three-bay sink.
- Follow instructions on the sanitizer label for appropriate concentration or use 180°F final sanitizing rinse for hot water sanitizing machines
- Thoroughly wash, rinse and sanitize countertops, equipment and non-food contact surfaces. Allow to air dry.
- Refrigerated display and storage cases and other refrigerator equipment used to store food should be cleared of all contaminated products and their juices prior to cleaning.
- Refrigerated storage equipment should be thoroughly washed inside and outside with a hot detergent solution and rinsed free of detergents and residues. (Special attention should be given to lighting, drainage areas, ventilation vents, corners, cracks and crevices, door handles and door gaskets.) Treat all clean surfaces with a sanitizing solution.
- If the insulation, door gaskets, hoses, etc. are damaged by flood or liquefied food items, then replace or discard these refrigerated display cases and storage cases and other refrigerator equipment.
- All filters on equipment should be removed and replaced if not designed to be cleaned in place.
- Replace all ice machine filters and beverage dispenser filters, and flush all water lines, including steam water lines and ice machine water lines, for 10 to 15 minutes.
- Discard all ice in ice machines; clean and sanitize the interior surfaces (ice making compartment and storage bin); run the ice through 3 cycles; and discard ice with each cycle.
- Inspect all equipment to ensure it is operational (properly heating and cooling to correct temperatures) and that all aspects of its integrity are maintained.
- Stove units should be thoroughly cleaned and checked by the fire department, local utility company, or authorized service representative prior to use.

Physical Facilities

- If you have a well that has been flooded, the water should be disinfected and tested to confirm it is safe after flood waters recede.
- Thoroughly wash all physical facility interior surfaces (e.g., floors, walls, and ceilings), using potable water, with a hot detergent solution, rinsed free of detergents and residues, and treated with a sanitizing solution.
- Any exhaust systems and hoods should be thoroughly cleaned and freed of 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.

If you have any questions call the Food Protection Section at (603) 271-4589

Websites for Food Emergencies:

<http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/fp/publications.htm>

[http://www.fsis.usda.gov/factsheets/Severe Storms and Hurricanes Guide/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/factsheets/Severe%20Storms%20and%20Hurricanes%20Guide/index.asp)

<http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodDefense/Emergencies/FloodsHurricanesPowerOutages/default.htm>

<http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/emergency/>