



Wisconsin Food Code Fact Sheet



RESPONSE TO A FLOOD

Flood water can contain pathogens that could become a source of contamination on equipment, environmental surfaces, employee and/or customer shoes and clothing, and cleaning tools. Limiting contamination from flood water requires control of affected areas and preventing contact of flood water with equipment, people, food, and packaging.

It is recommended that the license holder note the date and time of the event. The Person in Charge should assess the situation and implement emergency procedures. Immediately discontinue operation if a safe operation cannot be maintained or if food safety cannot be assured using an alternative procedure. If there is a significant threat or danger to health, then an Imminent Health Hazard may exist and the license holder should immediately discontinue operations and notify the regulatory authority.

Public Health Considerations

During a flood, one of the primary concerns is to protect the health of employees and customers.

Always consider if there is an imminent health hazard that would not permit a safe operation. Could employees and/or customers be exposed to flood water or safety hazards such as submerged objects or electrical hazards?

Planning Ahead

Determine what areas, systems, equipment, food, and packaging may be impacted by a flood.

Consider the following:

- Site access and safety. Submerged electrical equipment may create an electrocution hazard.
- Food and packaging materials that come in contact with flood water.
- Areas where equipment and supplies could potentially come in contact with flood water.
- Procedures such as handwashing, warewashing, cleaning, and sanitizing that may be disrupted.

Salvaged Goods – Discarding After a Flood

Discard the following foods if water has covered, splashed, dripped, or seeped into the package:

- All opened containers and packages
- Alcoholic beverages
- Exposed foods, bulk foods, fresh produce, meat, poultry, fish, and eggs
- Any food packaged in paper, plastic, cloth, or fiber
- Cardboard boxes, even if contents seem dry, such as cereal, pasta, and rice
- Food in glass jars, including unopened jars
- Foods, liquids, and beverages in crown-capped bottles or containers with pull-tabs, corks, or screw caps



- Foods with cardboard seals, such as mayonnaise and salad dressings
- Canned food that is damaged, dented, leaking, bulging, rusted, or that have missing labels

Clean Up Following a Flood

- Remove any standing water.
- Remove wet materials. Dispose of those that cannot be effectively cleaned and sanitized.
- Discard any food in contact with flood water.
- Discard any single-use item in contact with flood water.
- All damaged food equipment must be removed and disposed of.
- Floors, walls, carpets, and furnishings beyond repair must be disposed of.
- Remove all wet materials. Dispose of those that cannot be effectively cleaned and sanitized.
- Clean and sanitize any utensils and equipment in the affected area.
- Launder any linens and uniforms that were in contact with flood water separately from other linens, using bleach and a mechanical dryer.
- Affected floors, walls, and equipment surfaces must be cleaned with soap and water, rinsed, and sanitized. Carpets will need to be removed or steam cleaned.
- Use a detergent solution to clean floors, equipment, or other affected areas followed by a clean water rinse.
- Sanitize the floor and any other affected areas by using a clear water sanitizer solution (8 ounces of bleach per 5 gallons of water = 500 parts per million chlorine solution).
- Air dry the affected area.

Documentation of Incident/Expense

Make sure a designated person records and documents all incidents/expenses incurred as a result of the flood, including photo and video records, if possible.

Additional Information:

[DATCP Food Code Fact Sheets](#)

[Emergency Action Plan for Retail Food Establishments | Conference for Food Protection](#)

[AFDO Food Emergency Regulator Pocket Guide](#)



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