



# Cleaning Up Your Business After a Flood

## PURPOSE

This fact sheet provides salvaging and remodeling information for bars, restaurants, and convenience stores. If your business has been involved in a flood, you will need to observe a few simple precautions as you begin the cleanup process. This fact sheet explains how to start running your business again, without risking your own health, or the health of your customers.

## Wash hands thoroughly and often!

### The right way to wash hands

- A. Wet hands with clean water.
- B. Put soap on hands and wrists.
- C. Keep fingers pointing down.
- D. Rub soapy hands together for 20 seconds.
- E. Wash all sides of hands, fingers, wrists, and thumbs.
- F. Use a nailbrush to clean under fingernails and rinse well.
- G. Dry with a clean paper towel.
- H. Turn off faucet with a paper towel.
- I. Open bathroom door with a paper towel.

## Food and beverage

Not all food or beverage items can be saved after a flood. You must discard any items in soft packaging or screw-top glass bottles that may have been in contact with floodwater. In some cases, you may be able to save commercially canned goods in metal cans or rigid plastic containers. The condition of the container is very important.

## Discard canned goods if:

- Can surface is rusted or pitted.
- Can is swollen or leaking.
- Can is badly creased or dented at the rims or seams.

## To salvage canned goods in metal cans:

- Remove the labels.
- Wash in safe, warm water and detergent.
- Sanitize with a solution of one tablespoon bleach in one gallon of safe water.

## When relabeling, be sure to include:

- The common or usual name of the product.
- The net contents of the container.
- The name, address and zip code of the "manufacturer".
- Any label codes from the original label.
- Any other required labeling information (i.e. expiration date).

## Salvage items in rigid plastic containers only if:

- They have not been submerged in floodwater or other liquids.
- The product is not contaminated.
- All traces of soil can be removed and there is no soil on the cap or closure.
- There is no evidence of rusting or pitting on the cap or closure and the seal is completely intact.
- The cap or crown is not dented in any way that affects the rim seal.
- The container is not defective in any other obvious way.

## Equipment

Thoroughly clean and sanitize all salvageable equipment. Use a detergent and then use a sanitizing solution made with one tablespoon bleach in one gallon of safe water.

### You can generally save equipment if:

- It is made of stainless steel or other nonabsorbent material.
- It contains only nonabsorbent, closed cell polyurethane insulation (this material is used in newer refrigerators and freezers and may require cleaning – contact the manufacturer.

### Discard any equipment that contains:

- Fiberglass insulation or an old Freon compressor that needs recharging.
- Rusted or deteriorating surfaces.

- Damage that cannot be repaired to NSF standards.

### *WARNING!*

*ALWAYS USE EXTREME CAUTION WHEN STARTING EQUIPMENT WITH ELECTRICAL COMPONENTS*

## Furnishings

Some furnishings and fixtures will need to be discarded if they have been in contact with floodwater. They include:

- All upholstered furniture including chairs, bar stools, benches, booth seats and bar armrests.
- Any tables or booths that cannot be effectively cleaned and sanitized.

## Buildings

When cleaning buildings, remember to:

- Remove stainless steel wall panels and set them aside for later reinstallation.
- Open, clean, decontaminate and dry out cavities in walls, floors and ceilings (to prevent mold and mildew, try to do this job within 24-48 hours after the flood waters recede).
- Discard plaster, wallboard, wallpaper, paneling or insulation if it has been in contact with floodwater.
- Discard all absorbent floor coverings, including carpet and carpet pads.
- Thoroughly scrub floors and woodwork within 24-48 hours after floodwaters recede, using a stiff brush, water, detergent and sanitizer.
- Discard any ceiling tile or other absorbent materials contaminated by floodwater.

*DO NOT REPLACE CEILING OR WALL TILE OR FLOORING UNTIL ENCLOSED SPACES ARE COMPLETELY DRY.*

## Use bleach to kill mold

If any materials are still wet or moist after 24-48 hours, you should assume they have mold growing on them. Disinfect floors or wood surfaces using a solution of  $\frac{1}{4}$  -  $\frac{1}{2}$  **cup bleach in a gallon of water**. If mold has already begun to grow, use a stronger solution – approximately  $\frac{1}{2}$  **gallon of bleach to a five-gallon** pail of water in a well-ventilated area.

*WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!*

## Equipment with waterlines

Take the following precautions when salvaging post-mix and beverage machines, coffee or tea urns, ice machines, glass washers, dishwashers, and other equipment with water connections:

- Flush waterlines, faucet screens and waterline strainers, and purge fixtures of any standing water.
- Clean and sanitize all fixtures, sinks and equipment, using detergent then a solution of one tablespoon of bleach in one gallon of water. More bleach can burn skin.

For more information, contact:

Saint Louis County Department of Public Health (314) 615-8900

Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services:

Flood Disaster Response  
[www.health.mo.gov/living/environment/floodrecovery/index.php](http://www.health.mo.gov/living/environment/floodrecovery/index.php)

Emergency Situations Tool Kit  
<http://www.health.mo.gov/emergencies/ert/dispreptoolkit.php>