

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.

Food and Beverages

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; or
- 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; and
- 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 "distributor" (i.e. the firm that relabeled the product);
- Any label codes from the original label; and
- Any other required labeling information.

Note: Only the owner or a licensed salvage professional (known as a "salver") can legally recondition food products. For more information, call the Minnesota Department of Agriculture at 651-201-6000.

Wash hands thoroughly and often!

The Right Way to Wash Hands

1. Wet hands with clean water
2. Put soap on hands and wrists.
3. Keep fingers pointing down.
4. Rub soapy hands together for 20 seconds.
5. Wash all sides of hands, fingers, wrists, and thumbs.
6. Use a nailbrush to clean under fingernails and rinse well.
7. Dry with a clean paper towel.
8. Turn off faucet with a paper towel.
9. Open bathroom door with a paper towel.

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; and
- The container is not defective in any other obvious way.

Salvaging beverage items

- Salvage corked wine bottles sealed by foil or wax.
- Do not salvage beverage containers with twist or screw tops.

Equipment

Thoroughly clean and sanitize all salvageable equipment. Use a detergent and 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; or
- It contains only nonabsorbent, closed cell polyurethane insulation (this material is used in newer refrigerators and freezers and may require cleaning – contact the manufacturer).

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Environmental Health Division
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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;
- Flood damaged wood/particle board or plastic laminate components (counters, cabinets, bars, etc.)

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;
- Remove any linoleum or asbestos tile that has been flooded so you can clean and dry the subflooring. You may be able to save and reuse linoleum or vinyl asbestos tile, if it can be cleaned and sanitized. MDH website: www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/asbestos/fl_oortile/index.html);
- Thoroughly scrub floors and woodwork within 24-48 hours after floodwaters recede, using a stiff brush, water, detergent and sanitizer; and
- 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 of 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.

MDH District Offices

Bemidji	218-308-2100
Duluth	218-723-4642
Fergus Falls	218-332-5150
Mankato	507-344-2700
Marshall	507-537-7151
Metro	651-201-4500
Rochester	507-206-2700
St. Cloud	320-223-7300

MDH Environmental Health Flood Information:

www.health.state.mn.us/floods

MDH Environmental Health Contacts:

www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/contactus.htm

If you require this document in another format such as large print, Braille, or cassette tape, contact 651-201-5000 or 1-800-657-3908. For deaf or hard of hearing TTY: 651-201-5797