

PUBLIC HEALTH FACT SHEET

No. 113

POST DISASTER GUIDELINES FOR FOOD BUSINESSES

During and after disasters, food establishments may be affected by power outages, floodwaters, contamination of the water supply, and structural damage to the building. Disasters affect the safety of the food supply and the ability to prepare food in a safe manner. Proper food handling and sanitation techniques will reduce the threat of food contamination and food borne illness.

Environmental Health Officers will visit all food businesses in the affected areas as soon as possible. Your business will be required to meet the same conditions as in a routine inspection. It is a condition of your food business registration that you comply with the Food Act 2004. An EHO may order a business to close if the food business has opened and unsafe conditions exist.

Prior to resuming food operations food businesses must ensure that:

- All unsafe, potentially hazardous food has been thrown out or removed from service.
- Electricity and gas services are restored. All circuit breakers have been reset as need.
- Septic system, if applicable, is functioning correctly.
- All equipment and facilities have been thoroughly cleaned and sanitised.
- All equipment and facilities are operating properly (ie fridges below 5°C and freezers below – 18°C).
- Hot and cold potable water, under pressure, is available for hand washing and proper dishwashing.
- The condition of the physical structure of the facility does not endanger the safe and sanitary handling of food and equipment.

Remember the golden rules of clean-up work:

1. IF IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!
2. WASH YOUR HANDS THOROUGHLY,
and do it often.

For more information contact your nearest Environmental Health Office on
1800 095 646.

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