



# MIDDLESEX COUNTY OFFICE OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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## FACT SHEET

### Retail Food Establishment Advisory for Flood Waters

#### Natural Flooding

Foods that have come in contact with flood water are generally unsafe to eat and can cause severe infections. As a result, food touched by flood waters should be discarded. If you are unsure and need further assistance please contact your local health department.

- If your retail food establishment has been effected by the flood, promptly call your local health department, as per Chapter 24 "Sanitation in Retail Food Establishments and Food and Beverage Vending Machines" 8:24.
- If flood waters have entered food preparation, storage and/or operational areas the establishment must close until evaluated by the health department.
- No food items shall be prepared, served, or removed from establishment without Health Department approval.
- Cleaning and sanitizing of floors, equipment and counter areas that have been affected by flood waters must occur prior to reopening.
- Ice machines affected by flood waters shall be emptied, cleaned and sanitized prior to reuse.
- Food items must be discarded if they have come into contact with flood waters. Examples are: Fresh produce, meat, poultry, fish and eggs; open containers and packages; all food in cardboard boxes paper, foil or cellophane; spices, seasonings, extracts, bulk flour, bulk liquids, sugar, cakes, bread, cookies, candies and other similar products.
- Food in glass or plastic jars and bottles may be unsafe as the flood water may seep into the lids of these containers and may contaminate the food.

#### Power Outage

If your establishment has been effected by a power outage please adhere to the following guidelines:

- Promptly contact local health department, and power supplier.
- Establishment must close, unless other means of power is available and approved by proper authorities.
- Keep all refrigerators and freezers closed. Do not open.
- Any foods being cooked/or out for consumption must be discarded, e.g. steam table, salad bar, buffet table, etc.
- If power is out for more than 2 hours, begin to secure alternative cold hold storage means, such as:
  - Dry ice/regular ice
  - Generators
  - Refrigerated trucks
  - Alternate site with health department approval. No food shall be transferred before approval
- Do not refreeze food that has been defrosted.

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