



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE  
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*Commissioner*

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## **RESTAURANT RE-OPENING GUIDELINES FOLLOWING HURRICANE SANDY OCTOBER 31, 2012**

**The following guidelines are for restaurants and other food service establishments affected by Hurricane Sandy either due to flooding, power outages or food contamination. Please review these guidelines carefully when restoring your facility for operations. If you have any questions, please contact the Bureau of Food Safety and Community Sanitation by telephone or email. A directory of staff and their contact information may be found at the end of this document.**

### ***GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR CLEAN-UP***

Food service establishments should have power restored before resuming operations. Some clean-up, particularly removing and discarding spoiled food, destroyed equipment and water damaged furnishings may begin immediately.

**FOOD AND BEVERAGES:** Food that has been exposed to flood water, including sealed and open packages, boxes, cans, produce and meat must be discarded to avoid foodborne illness. Boxes must be opened and the food denatured and discarded. If you remove the labels from canned products, you may wash and sanitize the cans twice before opening and using the product. Potentially hazardous food that was not flooded, but reached temperatures of 41 degrees Fahrenheit or above, must be denatured and discarded. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Meat (beef, poultry, lamb, seafood, etc.)
- Milk, cream, cream based preparations
- Soups, stews, casseroles or similar prepared dishes.

If power was restored to your facility before you returned, the refrigeration units and the food within them may have returned to safe temperatures. However, it is likely that the food has been out of temperature for long lengths of time, allowing

bacteria and other pathogens that can cause foodborne illness to grow. Heat treatment may not be sufficient to render this food safe, so please denature and discard these potentially hazardous items. Pouring bleach or a colored detergent on food (add food coloring if possible) is an acceptable way to denature food, an essential practice to assure the food is not salvaged

**EQUIPMENT:** Thoroughly clean and sanitize all equipment that may have been exposed to contamination. Refrigerators and freezers and other equipment with fiberglass insulation must be checked to see if the insulation was exposed to flood water. If it was exposed, it must be removed and replaced. Styrofoam or closed cell polyurethane insulation may be cleaned but it is best to check with the manufacturer. A licensed electrician should thoroughly inspect electrical components (including wiring, compressors and switches) to determine if they should be replaced. Check water heaters particularly if flood water got into the gas burner, electrical parts or insulation.

**WALK-IN COOLERS:** If walk-ins have been flooded, the floors and walls should be cleaned and sanitized. If flood waters rose above panels with holes are otherwise not intact, the panel should be replaced. Those with wood floors will need to have the flooring replaced.

**FURNISHINGS:** Porous or absorbent furniture and fixtures should be discarded if they have come in contact with flood water. This includes upholstered furniture, tables and booths that cannot be effectively cleaned and sanitized. Paper and disposable products that have been in contact with flood water should also be discarded.

**WALLS AND CEILINGS:** Sheetrock, insulation or ceiling tiles that have been soaked by flood waters should be removed to at least 30 inches above the waterline. Paneling may be removed and saved but air should circulate around wall cavities to dry the studs and the sills, which do not have to be replaced if dried properly. Flooded portions of studs and sills should be treated with a biocide such as a bleach and water solution to avoid mold or mildew growth.

**FLOORS AND COVERINGS:** You should remove linoleum or tile that has been flooded to clean and dry wooden subfloors. This will prevent mold growth in the future. If this cannot be done immediately, you may clean and sanitize the area and replace the flooring at a later date. If flooring is on a concrete slab, only damaged or loose tiles need to be removed. Linoleum or vinyl tile may be saved if you can clean and sanitize them. Carpeting, padding or foam rubber, including padding under tiles, must be thrown away if soaked by flood waters.

**DUCT WORK:** Duct work for heat or air conditioning that was submerged need to be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized. You will need to replace sections of duct where this is not possible. Insulation around duct work or ducts made of compressed fiberglass must be replaced.

**PLEASE REMEMBER, ALL EQUIPMENT, FURNITURE, WALLS AND FLOORS IN YOUR ESTABLISHMENT NEED TO BE THOROUGHLY CLEANED AND SANITIZED. THIS SHOULD BE DONE TWICE TO ENSURE THAT YOU REMOVE FLOOD RESIDUE THAT MAY CONTAMINATE FOOD.**

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION MAY BE FOUND AT: [www.fsis.usda.gov](http://www.fsis.usda.gov)**

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS ABOUT THIS, PLEASE CALL ONE OF THE FOLLOWING NUMBERS:**

**(347) 396-2105**

**(347) 396-2153**

**(347) 396-2135**

**(347) 396-2133**