

AFTER THE FLOOD: Food Salvaging and Disposal

FOODS EXPOSED TO FLOOD WATER OR DEBRIS MUST BE CAREFULLY EVALUATED TO DETERMINE ITS SAFETY

Floodwater will carry contaminants into homes, businesses, and food establishments.

It is recommended that your insurance company and a licensed salvager be contacted for advice and evaluation (*salvagers may be found in the Yellow Pages under "Salvage Merchandise"*).

FOODS THAT MUST BE DISCARDED

- ✓ any open or unpackaged food, including ice and beverages
- ✓ any packaged food manufactured in the following way:
 - crown cap bottles and jars (*requiring a bottle or can opener to remove the top*)
 - cork top bottles and jars (*e.g., wine bottles*)
 - screw top bottles and jars
 - packaged in fabric or paper bags
 - packaged in cardboard cartons
- ✓ produce
- ✓ potentially hazardous foods with temperatures between 41⁰F and 140⁰F

FOODS THAT MAY BE SALVAGED

- ✓ unopened canned foods **IF**:
 - labels are intact (*however, labels must be removed and the can re-labeled with a permanent marker prior to cleaning and sanitizing as described below*)
 - cans are not dented along any seam (*side seam, top or bottom seam*)
 - cans do not show any signs of swelling, leaking, or loss of vacuum (*for example, puffy ends, pinhole leaks on metal, etc.*)
 - cans are not rusty
 - cans have been cleaned and sanitized using a 100 parts per million (*ppm*) sanitizing solution (*see After the Flood: Cleaning Up the Food Facility*)

TRASH AND GARBAGE MUST BE DISPOSED OF PROPERLY TO AVOID HEALTH RISKS

After a disaster, large amounts of trash and garbage can be expected. Discarded food, debris from damage, and other items can fill the streets and cause a sanitation nightmare — these conditions lead to potential health risks. The number of rodents and flies can increase significantly and the potential for disease transmission may reach dangerous levels.

To properly dispose of food waste:

- ✓ place all discarded foods in plastic trash bags — do not overfill
- ✓ securely tie the top of the bag to prevent spillage, to control odors, and to prevent insects from entering bags
- ✓ place tied bags into dumpsters or trash cans that have tight fitting lids to prevent rodents from getting to the food — do not allow food waste to accumulate outside of dumpsters or trash cans
- ✓ make arrangements with your trash company if a heavy volume of trash has been collected
- ✓ separate all hazardous materials and chemicals for appropriate disposal — contact your trash company for help in disposal of these materials.