

Retail Food Establishments: Recovering from a Flood

Regulation 61–25: Retail Food Establishments



scdhec.gov/food

Retail food establishments (RFE) impacted by a flooding event should adhere to the following guidance when it is safe to do so and prior to preparing and serving food:

If there is an imminent health hazard or safe operation cannot be maintained, the RFE must discontinue operation.

1) Assessment

After a flooding event, contact your local building code department and other appropriate agencies to determine if the building structure is safe for re-entry.

2) Clean-Up

Corrective actions should begin as soon as possible, after the flood waters recede and entry into the building has been approved, to prevent mold and mildew growth.

- » A safe water supply and functioning waste disposal system is needed before starting clean-up. Commence cleaning affected areas as described in the "Flood: General Cleaning Procedures" section of the **Emergency Action Plan (EAP)**.
- » If under a Boil Water Advisory or Notice, the RFE must follow recommendations and requirements listed in **Water-Related Emergencies**. Additional guidance is available in the "Contaminated Water Supply" section of the **EAP**.
- » If the RFE has an interruption of water service, guidance listed in **Water-Related Emergencies** must be followed. During a temporary interruption of the water supply, alternative water sources are allowed as described in R.61-25, Chapter 5, 5-104.11. Guidance is available in the "Interruption of Water Service" section of the **EAP**.
- » Remove any standing water as soon as possible; including any standing water that may be beneath floors where refrigeration or electrical conduits are located, before starting clean-up procedures.
- » If there is sewage backup inside the RFE, see the "Sewage Backup" section of the **EAP**, and **Vomit and Fecal Event Cleanup** for guidance.
- » The RFE's drinking water system must be flushed and sampled after a water-related emergency per Chapter 5, 5-101.12. In most cases, this will be completed by your water provider.

- » Absorbent wall and insulation materials are especially susceptible to mold and should be removed and replaced as soon as possible.
- » Clean and disinfect all utensils, equipment, and surfaces in the affected area(s). Guidance on recovery may be found in the "Sewage Backup" and "Floods" sections of the **EAP** and **Vomit and Fecal Event Cleanup**. **After disinfection, utensils and other food contact surfaces must be washed, rinsed, and sanitized.**
- » Any linens or uniforms contaminated by flood water must be discarded or professionally laundered prior to use.

3) Salvage

- » Identify food, packaging materials, equipment, surfaces, and supplies that are salvageable. For guidance, consult the "Flood: Food Salvage Assessment" section of the **EAP**.
- » Any time/temperature control for safety (TCS) food that fell out of compliance with Chapter 3, is non-salvageable.

4) Disposal

Secure food to be discarded in a designated storage area away from food preparation and other storage items per Chapter 6, 6-404.11.

- » Properly dispose of non-salvageable items per the "Flood: Food Salvage Assessment" section of the **EAP**.
- » Local DHEC office and/or your insurance company may request that the RFE document the type and amount of food being discarded/disposed.

5) Resuming Service

DHEC will provide support, in person or virtually, to RFEs in the impacted area(s). As soon as your facility is in compliance with applicable sections of R. 61-25, which may include operating under Chapter 9, 9-8, "Temporary Food Service Establishments," or using provisions of the **EAP**, operations may resume.

If assistance is needed, contact your local DHEC office. Please see [DHEC Food Safety for: Regulation 61-25, Emergency Action Plan, and Water-Related Emergencies](#) documents.