



Last Minute Preparation Before The Storm

NOW

PROTECT YOUR INVENTORY

- Cancel incoming food supplies.
- Take an inventory of food and other items immediately before the impending disaster. (Consider recording the inventory through photos or cell phone video.) Discard old or unnecessary items.
- Move food items and packaging materials to highest shelving possible or to an alternate commercial location. (No food storage at home.)
- Tie down loose items that can float to prevent them from being carried away by floodwaters.
- Store chemicals above possible flood levels in sealed containers. Chemicals should never be stored above any food products.

PREPARE FOR A POWER OUTAGE

- Place thermometers in all refrigeration and freezer units that will store TCS foods.
- Upright and display units will lose temperature faster – transfer food to walk-in cooler and freezer.
- Cover food with plastic or canvas tarps, blankets, quilts, and/or newspapers.
- If possible, group packages of cold food together.
- Freeze any refrigerated foods that you may not need immediately (meats, dairy products, leftovers, etc.). This can extend the time these foods remain $\leq 41^{\circ}\text{F}$.
- Use ice or ice baths to rapidly cool small batches of food for refrigeration. Do not place hot foods in refrigerators or freezers as this will rapidly raise the temperature inside these units to unsafe levels.
- Organize the freezer compartment to minimize contamination from meat and poultry juices in the event of a thaw.
- Add extra ice and frozen containers of water to your freezers and coolers to keep temperatures longer. Caution: dry ice may result in the unsafe build-up of CO_2 (carbon dioxide) and should be handled only by trained workers.
- Turn freezers and refrigerators to lowest temperature setting.
- Full freezers will hold its temperature for 48 hours; half-full freezers for 24 hours.
- Refrigerators should be able to maintain their temperature ($\leq 41^{\circ}\text{F}$) for 4 hours.
- If someone is present during the storm, monitor and record refrigeration temperatures and times in the warmest part of the unit using measuring devices mounted outside the unit when possible to minimize opening doors.

STOCKPILE ADDITIONAL SUPPLIES

- Dry ice, ice, plastic tarps, signs, tape, additional thermometers, etc.
- Single-service articles (disposable plates, utensils, cups, etc.)
- Cleaning – tools, cleaners, hand soap, disinfectants, gloves, etc.
- Pest control – bait boxes, glue boards, etc.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for entering a flooded establishment - eye protection, rubber boots, gloves, outer protective clothing (coveralls or long-sleeve shirts and long pants or disposable outer wear), N-95 filtration mask (fitted to the individual) if removing mold.

PROTECT YOUR FACILITY

- Safeguard electrical, natural gas, and refrigeration equipment. Know how to properly turn off equipment,





the outside main gas valve, electricity at the main breaker, and the main water valve when flooding is likely.

- Develop a plan for monitoring and maintaining sump pumps, downspouts, plumbing, grease traps, exterior surface grading, storm drains, and other facilities that can contribute to flooding
- Identify all water connections. Locate emergency cut-off valves, back siphonage preventers, and water supply lines and be prepared to disconnect them. *This includes machines that have water-line connections:*

WHEN THE STORM HITS

- Cease all food operations if the power is out more than 4 hours, there is a break in water service for more than 1 hour, or another imminent health hazard occurs (flooding, structural damage, etc.). Notify the Houston Health Department Bureau of Consumer Health Services (BCHS) at chs@houstontx.gov or [\(832\) 393-5100](tel:832-393-5100).

AFTER THE STORM

STORM DAMAGE?

- Contact the Houston Permitting Center for permits and/or approval to replace: large floor-mounted equipment; repair or replace interior surfaces; and repair, replace, or remodel the facility's structure.
Houston Permitting Center
1002 Washington Houston 77002
(832) 394-8810
Office Hours 8 am-4:30 pm

ROAD TO RECOVERY

- Refer to www.houstonconsumer.org for information what to do after a power outage, break in water service, flooding, or other imminent health hazard. There are very specific checklists for you to follow for each of the imminent health hazards. **BCHS MUST GRANT APPROVAL BEFORE YOU REOPEN YOUR ESTABLISHMENT.**

THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA MUST BE MET BEFORE REQUESTING AN INSPECTION TO RESUME NORMAL OPERATIONS:

- Electricity, water, wastewater, and gas services have been fully restored.
- All circuit breakers have been properly reset as needed.
- All plumbing fixtures and pipes are operating properly and are in good repair.
- All equipment and facilities are operating properly and in good repair including:

<input type="checkbox"/> Lighting	<input type="checkbox"/> Water supply
<input type="checkbox"/> Refrigeration	<input type="checkbox"/> Hot water heaters
<input type="checkbox"/> Hot holding	<input type="checkbox"/> Toilet facilities
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooking	<input type="checkbox"/> Warewashing machines
<input type="checkbox"/> Ventilation	<input type="checkbox"/> Handwashing facilities
- All unsalvageable food, equipment, and any other items have been properly disposed of or are segregated from uncontaminated food and equipment.
- The approximate number of pounds of food to be disposed/has been disposed of and the method of disposal is documented.
- All contaminated (by flood waters or sewage) floors, walls, and other affected surfaces have been





replaced or cleaned and **disinfected**.

- All contaminated (by flood waters or sewage) food contact surfaces, equipment, and utensils have been cleaned and **disinfected, rinsed thoroughly to remove chemical residues, and then sanitized and air dried**.
- Ice bins have been cleaned and sanitized in ice machines where ice has melted during a power outage.
- If flooded, the grease trap has been cleaned by an approved transporter prior to the reinspection.
- For an interruption in water service, all water connections have been flushed and all equipment with water connections have been cleaned and sanitized.
- If required, appropriate City of Houston plans have been submitted and approved, and permits have been obtained from the Houston Permitting Center to replace large (floor-mounted) equipment, repair/replace interior surfaces, and/or repair, reconstruct or remodel the facility's structure. Work has been completed as required.
- No imminent health hazard exists.

8/26/20

