



Preparation Measures Before a Predicted Storm*

Your Employees

- Determine key employees/positions that are “critical” and the tasks they must perform.
- Identify who will enter facility after the event and provide instruction for entering the site safely and determining whether operations can be resumed.
- Ensure the manager or Person in Charge (PIC) knows:
 - to notify the Houston Health Department Bureau of Consumer Health Services (BCHS) at www.houstonconsumer.org if the establishment closes due to an imminent health hazard and before resuming any food service operations
 - to contact BCHS at 832-393-5100 or CHS@houston.tx.gov with any food safety questions or concerns
- Prepare just-in-time training (include personal protective clothing and safety) for employees who will be cleaning up after the disaster unless a professional cleaning company is hired.

Plan for Communication When Communication Can Get Tough

- Consider use of texting to communicate with your employees as Wi-Fi and Internet connections may be down. (A telephone landline may work as well.)
- Consider social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to receive important disaster information.
- Post a sign in a prominent location identifying the names and phone numbers of key personnel who can be contacted in the event of an emergency.
- Update your list of critical contacts and phone numbers.

Prepare Your Establishment for Flooding

- Safeguard electrical, natural gas, and refrigeration equipment. Know how to properly turn off equipment, outside main gas valve, electricity at the main breaker, and the main water valve when flooding is probable.
- 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.

Protect your Inventory

- Cancel incoming food deliveries.
- Take an inventory of food and other items. Discard old or unnecessary items.
- Store your inventory, tableware, and supplies as high as possible above the anticipated flood level or at an off-site 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 in sealed containers above flood levels. Chemicals should never be stored above any food products.

* Establishments that have a Bureau of Consumer Health Services Accepted- Emergency Preparedness Plans should follow their plans for guidance.

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, personal protective clothing, etc
- Pest Control – bait boxes, glue boards, etc. Prepare for an Interruption in Water Service: No Water/Unsafe Water

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 such as:
 - post-mix beverage machines
 - juicers
 - spray misters
 - steam kettles
 - coffee or tea urns
 - ice machines
 - glass washers,
 - dishwashers, etc.
- Arrange for one or more alternate sources of water:
 - water hauled from a commercial drinking water refill station or other approved public water supply using covered, food-grade containers
 - commercially bottled drinking water
 - water brought to a rolling boil for at least two minutes (for limited use during a Boil Water Notice)

Protect your Time and Temperature Controlled for Safety (TCS) Food

- Identify which refrigeration units will be kept cold using an alternate method and determine how they will be monitored, who will do the monitoring, and how the temperatures will be recorded.
- Arrange for one or more alternate means of refrigeration or preserving refrigeration (must keep food at $\leq 41^{\circ}\text{F}$):
 - generator and fuel for the selected units. Individuals must be specifically trained to operate the generators as carbon monoxide will build up in enclosed or tight spaces. Proper ventilation is crucial.
 - a refrigerator truck that can be delivered in an emergency. (Provide totes for storing food.)
 - a refrigerated warehouse that has a backup generator. (Keep food cold during transfer.)
- Additional Considerations for Refrigeration
 - Examine refrigerator and freezer door gaskets and replace those that are worn.
 - Ensure all refrigerators and freezers have a working thermometer.
 - Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible.
 - Use tape and signs to keep doors shut.

- 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.
- Freeze any refrigerated foods that you may not need immediately (meats, dairy products, leftovers, etc.). This can extend the time these foods remain below 41°F.
- Add extra ice and frozen containers of water to your freezers and coolers to keep cold temperatures longer.
- Turn freezers and refrigerators to lowest temperature setting. Full freezers will keep cold temperatures longer.

Use Dry Ice carefully!

- Allow 2 to 2.5 pounds of dry ice per cubic foot of freezer space.
- Do not lock the freezer or cover air vents.
- Place boards or heavy cardboard on top of packages, place dry ice on top of boards.
- Place dry ice on each shelf in an upright freezer.
- Packing food tightly with dry ice will keep food frozen longer. Use blankets or crumpled newspaper to fill empty spaces.
- Dry ice should be handled only by trained workers. Use insulated gloves or tongs when handling dry ice to avoid tissue damage.
- As dry ice melts, it becomes carbon dioxide gas. Precautions must be taken to avoid breathing the gas when it is placed in an enclosed space.
- Refer to the safety data sheet (SDS) for dry ice for personal protective equipment requirements, ventilation, exposure controls, and handling practices. Issues of use include dry ice availability, volume needed, transportation, and site handling and safety.

Arrange for Cleaning and Repairs after the Storm

- Know who to call for restoration and repairs after the storm. Make arrangements/contacts applicable to your operation now.
- Be prepared to contact the Houston Permitting Center for approval and/or permits to replace large floor-mounted equipment, repair or replace interior surfaces, and repair, replace, or remodel the facility's structure.
- Consider arrangements for:
 - a professional cleaning company experienced in cleaning food establishments exposed to flood water/sewage backups
 - additional waste disposal for cleanup after the disaster
 - salvaging company licensed by the State of Texas (for food service operations that may have large quantities of salvageable food items)

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