### Date: [ENTER DATE]

### [INSERT TOWN HEADER]

**PSA: Flood Response for Food Establishments**

Floodwaters can contaminate facilities, equipment, and food with sewage, chemicals, and pathogens. Proper flood preparedness and cleanup protects your patrons and ensures you meet health regulations.

**1. Immediate Response During Flooding**

* **Cease all operations** and notify your local health department. Operations should not resume until flood waters recede and you are cleared by health officials.
* **Protect utilities and storage:** Shut off power if water enters prep areas. Move food, utensils, and equipment to higher ground.
* **Avoid contamination:** Don’t let floodwater enter storage or prep surfaces—seal doors, use sandbags or boards if possible.

**2. Clean & Disinfect**

* **Dispose of all contaminated items:** Throw out any food (cans, packaging, produce) that came into contact with floodwater.
* **Sanitize equipment and contact surfaces:** Clean with hot soapy water, then sanitize using a bleach solution (50–100 ppm chlorine)
* **Handle porous materials carefully:** Carpets, wooden boards, and insulation often must be removed—they’re hard to sanitize properly.

**3. Inspect & Restore Safe Operations**

* **Facility inspection:** Have a licensed electrician and plumber verify safety. If your facility is on a private well, test the water for safety.
* **Structural and food-safety checks:** Ensure hand sinks are operational, floors are draining, and no water is pooling in prep areas.
* **Official clearance:** Resume only after passing a health department inspection and receiving approval to reopen.

**4. Post-Cleanup Best Practices**

* **Boost sanitation:** Re-train staff on cleaning protocols, ensure adequate sanitizer test strips and PPE.
* **Monitor equipment:** Check refrigeration is keeping ≤ 40 °F and thermostats are working, restock thermometers.
* **Maintain readiness:** Keep flood-response kits with bleach, gloves, and cleaning supplies on hand for future events. Use the Emergency Action Plan for Retail Food Establishments to develop protocols for your facility.

For more information:

* [FDA Restaurants and Grocers Reopening After Hurricanes and Flooding](https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/restaurants-and-grocers-reopening-after-hurricanes-and-flooding)
* [Emergency Action Plan for Retail Food Establishments](https://www.foodprotect.org/media/guide/Emergency%20Action%20Plan%20for%20Retail%20food%20Est.pdf)
* [Mass.gov Flood Safety Tips](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/flood-safety-tips?_gl=1*kwetsz*_ga*MTk1ODAyNTcwNi4xNzA0MjI2NDk5*_ga_MCLPEGW7WM*czE3NTAxODM5NTAkbzEwJGcwJHQxNzUwMTgzOTUwJGo2MCRsMCRoMA..)