

WEST VIRGINIA BUREAU FOR PUBLIC HEALTH
PUBLIC HEALTH SANITATION DIVISION

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FLOOD SANITATION

**RETAIL FOOD STORES, FOOD SERVICE ESTABLISHMENTS,
FOOD PROCESSING PLANTS, AND FOOD WAREHOUSES**

During natural disasters, especially floods, foodstuffs may be contaminated by flood water rendering many of these items unfit for human consumption or use.

The importance of preventing the consumption or use of such items necessitates the prompt destruction of such products to eliminate any threat to public health.

When owners, warehouse supervisors, transportation agencies, food processors, and others voluntarily follow advice of the health department concerning the disposition of contaminated or unwholesome foodstuffs, household products, medicines and cosmetics, no formal seizure action will be taken; however, when necessary, embargoes will be placed on such items and other appropriate legal action taken to protect the health of the public.

Such items exposed to flood waters are not to be sold or disposed of in any manner unless prior approval has been given in writing by a sanitarian.

When requested by a sanitarian, the owner, proprietor, or person-in-charge shall provide an accurate, signed inventory of such merchandise.

No damaged or flooded foodstuff, household products, medicines or cosmetics shall be sold or given to any commercial salvage concerns or other persons coming into an area for the purpose of buying/obtaining such items. Such concerns or persons should be reported to the sanitarian.

The following information may be useful as a guide in determining the disposition of foodstuffs, household products, medicines and cosmetics:

1. All fruits and vegetable products coming into contact with flood waters or other contaminating material shall be destroyed in a manner approved by the sanitarian.
2. All meats shall be destroyed in a manner approved by the sanitarian.
3. Products such as breakfast cereals, bakery goods, condiments, dried fruits, dried milk, flour, milk in glass, paper or plastic containers, and similar foodstuffs that have been exposed to flood waters, shall be destroyed in a manner approved by the sanitarian.

4. Food and other products in hermetically sealed containers and exposed to flood waters shall be deemed to have no salvage value and shall be destroyed in a manner approved by the sanitarian.
5. All items, including food and beverages packed in screw cap or crimp cap containers, shall, if exposed to flood waters, be destroyed in a manner approved by the sanitarian.
6. All perishable foodstuffs (items requiring refrigeration) which have been without refrigeration for more than 4 hours, shall be destroyed in a manner approved by the sanitarian even if not exposed to flood waters.
7. Other products, such as tobacco in any form, household products, or medicines and cosmetics which may come into contact with the public's hands or mouth, or any other household supplies which may endanger the health of the public by transmitting or spreading flood contaminated material, shall be disposed of or salvaged in a manner approved by the sanitarian.

All retail food stores, food service establishments, food processing plants, and warehouses shall be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before reopening for business, and shall not engage in such business activity until inspected and issued approval for reopening by the sanitarian.