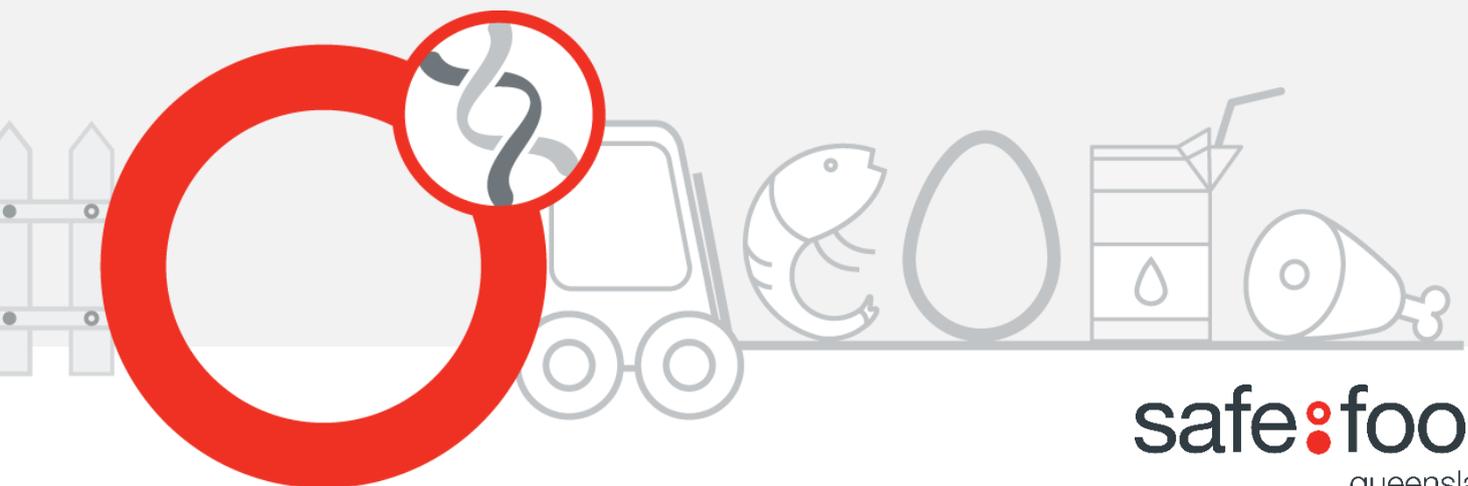


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# Advice for food businesses to assist in recovering from an emergency

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Food businesses need to consider the impacts of an emergency (such as flooding) on their premises and products and ensure that any risks are managed before they start operating again.

Food businesses impacted by flood waters must not sell food that is unsafe or unsuitable and they must ensure that any discarded food cannot be easily accessed or collected by consumer.

Key areas that food businesses need to consider are:

### **1. Is the premise structurally sound?**

Food businesses should check that the premises structure is safe, that infrastructure (e.g. water/steam pipes, electrical cables etc.) is not damaged/weakened, and that key pieces of equipment have not been damaged or become misaligned within the chain.

### **2. Is there adequate supply of potable water or alternative risk mitigation steps in place?**

Food businesses must comply with any 'boil water' notice that is in place. Food businesses must cease processing if they cannot comply unless they have an alternative risk mitigation procedure (e.g. disinfection, testing) in place.

Once the 'boil water notice' is lifted, premises must decide if they have sufficient confidence in their system to start processing. Is the infrastructure intact from the last test point to the point of use? Premises should consider flushing the reticulation network prior to use and even super chlorination to remove any residual contamination.

Food businesses need to assess the specific risk to their process and product, considering their location relative to damage caused by the flood, and likely risk to the water supply, how much water is utilised in the process, what is the nature of the end product (RTE – high risk or raw – low risk), and what mitigating steps for water they may have available to them e.g. alternative treatment systems, verification testing etc.

### **3. Is there power and other essential services, such as refrigeration, available?**

Food businesses should also consider whether disruptions to the power supply might have resulted in damage to key pieces of electronic control equipment or equipment failure alarms.

### **4. Are toilets and personal hygiene facilities available?**

Functional toilets and personal hygiene facilities must be available for people working in the premises, including potable water for hand washing.

### **5. Has the premises been thoroughly cleaned?**

Mud or other debris may harbour pathogens. Premises need to be fully cleaned, sanitised, and visually checked prior to recommencing processing operations. Manufacturers of RTE products should verify absence of *Listeria* in their processing environment (hygienic envelope) before releasing product.



## **6. Are raw materials still safe and suitable for use?**

Perishable products may no longer be safe or may be showing signs of spoilage after refrigeration failures following the flood. Food businesses should be aware that signs of temperature abuse (e.g. product misshapen or drip in packages or stained on cartons) may not be obvious if the refrigeration system again became operational some time before the food was able to be inspected.

Food businesses should utilise process failure procedures if attempting to salvage raw materials that may have been subject to temperature abuse.

Accreditation holders should also visually inspect raw materials for mud or other debris.

## **7. Are finished or partially processed products still safe and suitable for use?**

Food businesses need to consider the impact of the likes of power outages on any finished or partially processed products on site at the time of the flood.

In relation to refrigeration failures, it is recommended that the operator create a table outlining the scenario details relating to each refrigerated room in the plant. This is useful for working out relative risk for different types of products.

There may be other types of failures, such as interruption to cooking or drying processes.

These will need to be assessed on a case by case basis. Process failure principles need to be applied.

## **8. Do key personnel know what to do?**

It is important that key personnel know what they must do to produce safe food during an emergency.

## **9. Who do I contact for more information?**

Food businesses with any questions should contact Safe Food on 1800 300 815.

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