

**Adran Rheoleiddio/Regulatory Department**  
**Gwasanaeth Gwarchod y Cyhoedd**  
**Public Protection Service**  
Uwch Reolwr/Senior Manager – John C Reynolds



**Flood advice for businesses**

**Pre flood advice**

In the event of a flood warning it is important that everyone is prepared and has in mind the action they need to take with regard to their own premises. Wherever possible, equipment and food stocks should be removed from any area in danger of flooding. Do not underestimate the level to which the flood water may rise.

- Obtain sandbags or other flood defence devices.
- Obtain disinfectant.
- Contact your insurers: they should advise you of any particular actions you need to take to satisfy your policy requirements.
- All movable equipment and furniture should be relocated to the next floor if possible, but at least well above the estimated flood-level. You must consider the risks from manual handling to the health and safety of your employees.
- Switch off electrical and gas installations and equipment.
- Ensure drains from your premises are running efficiently.
- If food must remain in areas likely to become wet or damp, ensure all goods in opened bags and containers are decanted into air tight containers to prevent the food from becoming damp, mouldy and possibly unfit to eat .

**After flood advice**

As the flood waters recede council staff will offer advice.

As a business you must consider the safety of yourself, your employees, the general public and contractors who enter your premises.

You must also ensure you comply with your duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 when staff are carrying out work activities that they would not normally be doing. If your premises are at risk from flooding, a risk assessment should have been carried out.

**After flood advice for food businesses**

The Food Safety team may visit premises affected by flooding to offer specific advice on food hygiene and health and safety, in particular proper cleaning and disinfection of equipment and the proper disposal of flood damaged equipment, food and drink.

- Where canned and unopened packaged foods have been in contact with floodwater, they should be disposed of.
- Any opened packages not in air-tight containers should be discarded whether or not they have been in contact with floodwater, as they are likely to have become damp.
- All canned and bottled drinks (wine, spirits, beer and soft drinks) which have been in contact with floodwaters must be disposed of.

- Wooden beer casks which have been in contact at all with floodwaters must be discarded. Metal beer barrels may be able to be used to use as long as the floodwater has not reached any connection, outlet or inlet.
- Advise your suppliers, on returning any contaminated barrels, casks, etc. that they have been in contact with floodwaters so they can take the necessary precautions.
- If the floodwaters contained diesel, then any containers coming into contact with the water should not be used.

Contact us if you need a certificate for insurance purposes, or need help in disposing of equipment, goods and damaged food. There may be a charge is made for issuing the certificate. These costs are usually recoverable from your insurers.

It is essential that all flood-damaged food and drink is correctly disposed of to ensure that it cannot be consumed and cause illness. If you are in any doubt about the safe disposal of such items, please contact us for advice.

### **Clean up operation**

Health risks can be minimised by taking general hygiene precautions. It is essential that, throughout the clean-up operation, your staff and any other persons having access to your premises are not put at risk to their health and safety.

Your responsibilities under health, safety and welfare legislation still apply, even during these difficult times.

- You must ensure your staff are aware of these precautions whilst carrying out the cleaning operation.
- Personnel carrying out the cleaning operation should wear protective clothing including gloves, overalls, suitable footwear and cover cuts and open wounds with waterproof dressings.
- All river debris, furnishings, equipment and other items which have to be disposed of must be dealt with as carefully as possible. Persons must not be put at risk of coming directly into contact with potentially contaminated rubbish which may contain hidden, sharp or jagged objects.
- Again you must consider the risks from manual handling to the health and safety of your employees. If risks exist, the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 apply.
- All surfaces must be cleaned with hot soapy water and then disinfected.
- It is vital that disinfectants are used as the manufacturer's instructions recommend.
- To dry out your premises once the mopping up operation is complete you will need to introduce as much ventilation as possible, and then apply gentle heat and finally you may need to employ a dehumidifier.

### **Clean up advice for food businesses**

All food preparation areas, surfaces, equipment, glasses, crockery, food containers, beer-lines and optics must be thoroughly cleaned with hot soapy water and then disinfected with a food-safe disinfectant such as Milton.

Any badly damaged, cracked or chipped items will not clean properly and so should be disposed of.

Some equipment, although in sound working order, will not be easy to clean and disinfect. Any equipment such as fridges, freezers and ovens. where the motor or fan is included in, or directly communicates with the main body of the unit must be disposed of.

Where equipment has a smooth, non-absorbent interior and does not communicate directly with a motor or fan, then it is possible to properly clean and disinfect the unit as long as the seals are intact. Where the seals are at all damaged, then they cannot be adequately cleaned and disinfected and may have allowed floodwater to enter the unit: in this case it should be properly disposed of.

**REMEMBER.** It is important that you contact your insurers **BEFORE** disposing of any equipment.

If you are in any doubt about the need for disposal, or whether equipment is possible to disinfect properly, please contact us and we will visit to advise.

### **Re-opening of a food premises**

Once your premises are ready to re-open for business, please let us know. We may wish to visit, to ensure that food safety (and the health and safety of your staff and customers) can be assured and also to reassure you if you have any further concerns.

### **Rodent Infestations**

The flood water may have disturbed rodents which could have entered your premises and caused damaged to electrical wiring and furniture.

If there is a problem, a pest control contractor should be engaged our pest control team can be contacted using the contact details on this page.

### **Electrical Safety**

Electrical equipment and electrical installations can pose serious safety risks if they have been damaged by flood water.

- Switch off electrical installations and equipment if you have not already done so.
- Do not operate equipment which is in water or whilst standing in water.
- Keep away from any live equipment submerged in water.
- Have any installations or electrical equipment which has been flood damaged checked by an approved electrical contractor before being put back into use.
- Contact your electricity supplier if you have any concerns about the supply from the electricity meter and backwards.

### **Gas safety**

Gas equipment and gas installations can pose safety risks if damaged by flood water.

- If possible turn the gas control valve (usually situated adjacent to the gas meter) to the 'off' position.
- Ensure all gas appliances are turned off to minimise the possibility of water entering the gas supply pipes in your home.
- It is vitally important for safety reasons to have the appliances inspected by a Gas Safe registered engineer before being put back into use. The appliances may look and appear to be working normally, but the flue or ventilation systems which are essential for normal operation may have been adversely affected by floodwater.
- If you smell gas, or suspect a gas escape has occurred at any time, call Wales & West Utilities (WWU) immediately on 0800 111 999.

## **Water supply**

The quality of the drinking water to your premises may have been affected. Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water will be monitoring the quality of the drinking water. If you have any queries or feel you have cause to be concerned about the quality of your water supply please contact 0800 052 0130.

Any taps which have been submerged in contaminated floodwater should be cleaned using a bleach solution and run for 30 seconds prior to the water being used.

Your business premises may have the following facilities which may need specialist help following flooding.

## **Lifts and hoists**

Again these appliances should be thoroughly checked by a competent person to ensure that the flood waters have not affected the safety of the system.

## **Swimming pools**

If pools have become flooded, they must be drained, thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. After refilling the pool the water should be tested to check the system is not still contaminated with harmful bacteria.

## **Chemicals**

There may be chemical residues left after the flood water has gone down, either from open containers on your premises or elsewhere. Some of these chemicals can be harmful and could combine with other chemicals and form a more dangerous substance. You must consult with the suppliers of the chemicals for advice.

**Remember only when your premises are safe should be allowing members of the public back into the premises.**

For further advice please telephone **01766 77100** and ask for to speak within the environmental team in your area office.