



# County of San Diego

Department of Environmental Health

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## FIRE RECOVERY FOR FOOD OPERATIONS DAMAGED FOOD

The following checklist provides information on food salvaging operations for retail food facilities after having a fire or impact from smoke or ash damage. Damaged food products must be removed from sale or use and be properly disposed.

### CHECK CANNED GOODS FOR:

- Any damage caused by heat or pressure.
- Contact with liquid waste, sewage, chemical, clear water or floodwater (even clear water can be contaminated).
- Contact with dust, debris, or chemicals.
- Missing labels.
- Severely or sharply dented side panels of can.
- Dented lids.
- Damaged lid lips.
- Rust on lids and side seams.
- Bulging at seams, lids or sides.
- Separation at lid surfaces.
- Separation at body seams.
- Leaks or punctures.



### CHECK BOTTLES AND JARS FOR:

- Any damage caused by heat or pressure.
- Loose lids or caps.
- Breaks, chips, or cracks.
- Damaged or missing labels.
- Contact with liquid waste, sewage, chemicals, clear water or floodwater (even clear water can be contaminated).
- A foul odor upon opening container.

### CHECK PRODUCE FOR:

- Heat or fire damage, including ash or smoke.
- Residue or films.
- Physical damage.
- Foreign matter.
- Contact with liquid waste, sewage, chemicals, clear water or floodwater (even clear water can be contaminated).
- Foul odor or spoilage



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## **FIRE RECOVERY FOR FOOD OPERATORS: DAMAGED FOOD (CONTINUED)**

### **CHECK PREPACKAGED FOODS AND CONTAINERS FOR:**

- Torn, ripped, or opened packaging.
- Residue or film build-up on packaging.
- Physical damage of product.
- Contact with liquid waste, sewage, chemicals, clear water or floodwater (even clear water can be contaminated).
- Discard products that have leaks, breaks, glass splinters, or other evidence of contamination.

### **TESTING PREPACKAGED FOODS FOR DAMAGE:**

- Select a few prepackaged items from each shelf as samples.
- Open samples and inspect for evidence of smoke, foreign matter or spoilage. Discard samples after inspection.
- If samples show evidence of contamination or product spoilage within the packaging, remove all of the packages on that shelf and hold for evaluation by a licensed food salvager.
- If samples do not show any contamination of product, but show a substance build-up that is easily cleanable, clean the remaining shelf contents using only water and paper towel. Change paper towels often.
- Continue this procedure throughout the prepackaged food section(s).

### **OTHER FOODS (needing disposal):**

- Grain and flour which is normally finely divided, but is now caked/not free flowing.
- Foil packages which show evidence of stain on the inner wrapper.
- Contaminated bulk food items must be discarded.
- Refrigerated and/or frozen foods that exceed 41°F must be discarded. Frozen foods that are kept at or below 41°F can be salvaged.

**If items are found with the types of damages listed above, they are not to be sold or given away to the public...**

#### **DO:**

- Stack damaged foods and contaminated containers in a separate area.
- Double bag spoiled food in plastic bags and place in a watertight dumpster or trash cans with tight fitting lids if there is a small quantity.
- Contact your waste disposal company to coordinate disposal and landfill arrangements. Extra dumpsters may be needed.
- Contact your insurance company on possible recovery cost of damaged food.
- Contact a licensed food salvager for evaluation and review.

#### **DO NOT:**

- Return damaged product to shelves.
- Attempt to repair damage containers.
- Replace ripped, torn, or missing labels.
- Store spoiled or damaged produce for more than 7 days.

