

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
OFFICE OF HEALTH PROTECTION
DIVISION OF FOOD, DRUGS AND DAIRIES


TECHNICAL INFORMATION BULLETIN

DESCRIPTION: Technical Information Bulletin/ FDD #2

SUBJECT: Surveillance and Salvage Following Disasters

EFFECTIVE: October 24, 2007

SUPERSEDES: Technical Release #25, dated February 1, 1990
and June 1, 2005

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General

Disasters such as fires, floods, tornados, truck and railroad accidents, and other incidents frequently adulterate or contaminate food, drugs, medical devices or cosmetics. Professional judgment and the advice of experts are essential to determine if items have been damaged, the extent of the damage, if reconditioning is a viable option, and whether the item should be removed from commerce.

The following interpretations are based in part on the requirements of the Salvage Warehouses and Stores for Foods, Alcoholic Liquors, Drugs, Medical Devices and Cosmetics Code (77 Ill. Adm. Code Part 725) and the Illinois Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (410 ILCS 620). These interpretations are not a definitive response to damage noted at a site. If you have any questions concerning the proper disposition of an item, contact the agency, which regulates its production and/or the Illinois Department of Public Health.

Response

- 1) Receive notification of disaster
 - a) Gather all information possible concerning the location, nature of the occurrence, extent of the damage, etc. Obtain the time, names, titles and phone numbers of the individuals who are providing the information.
 - b) If necessary, contact an individual at the site (such as police, fire department, etc.) to get a clear idea of the scope of the problem and the relative safety concerns.
- 2) Contact your supervisor

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- 3) Evaluate the site prior to entering the entity or area. Personal safety is of primary concern. Do NOT go into an area which appears dangerous. If you see individuals in full body personal protective equipment (PPE) or other protective gear, do NOT enter the area until it is clear.

Do NOT go into a building with structural damage unless the site has been determined to be stable by qualified individuals.

- 4) Assess the site:

- a) Discuss the situation with the fire department, police, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), or other agencies at the site.
- b) Introduce yourself to the owner, owner's agent, and/or insurance personnel and present your credentials.
- c) Survey the site to see what conditions the items were exposed to during the disaster; i.e., heat, smoke, chemicals, power outage, temperature extremes, water, sewage and fire suppression method(s). The survey should include the exterior of the building as well as the actual facility storing the items.

Do not rush the survey. The information gathered at this time is the major basis for evaluating the need for destruction or salvage of items.

- d) During the survey, if you note conditions or products regulated by other agencies who have no representative present, contact the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA)(1-800-782-7860) to report the condition (i.e. chemical spills). IEMA will contact the applicable agencies needed at the site.
- e) If you are uncertain whether items should or can be salvaged, require that the owner or owner's representative place them in a secure area which will maintain product integrity and place the entire lot under embargo or "hold". Once an embargo or "hold" has been placed, the owner is responsible for maintaining the security of the embargo. It is important that as complete a description as possible be noted on the embargo or "hold" forms to ensure identification of all embargoed or held items at a later date.
- f) Keep in close contact with your supervisor. This is crucial for your personal safety, to keep your supervisor abreast of the situation, and for assistance in determining the disposition of the items.

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Types of Damage

Professional judgment is essential while assessing the damage and suitability of salvaging food, drug, medical devices and cosmetics. When in doubt about the extent of salvageability of any product, contact the agency which regulates its production or distribution.

Power Outage

The loss of mechanical refrigeration can adversely affect the quality and wholesomeness or effectiveness of food and perishable drugs. Assess the temperature of the products, the length of time the product has been exposed to improper temperatures, and the nature of the product. If the length of time exposure to improper temperatures cannot be determined, the product shall be destroyed.

The following may help you assess the situation.

- 1) Frozen foods which are still frozen (solid) may be sold.
- 2) Foods intended to be sold in a frozen state, but still at internal temperatures of less than 41°F and greater than 0° F may be immediately sold as a thawed, salvaged food item. Ice cream, frozen novelties, and other frozen items which lose product characteristics once thawed should be destroyed.
- 3) Potentially hazardous foods (PHF) or items with manufacturer's direction to keep the product at refrigerated temperatures are difficult items to assess as to a definitive temperature above which destruction is necessary. The time-temperature-product nature must be taken into consideration. PHF items found at internal temperatures above 41°F for longer than 4 hours shall be destroyed. If you are unable to determine how long the product was at an internal temperature of greater than 41°F, it shall be destroyed.
- 4) Drugs or medical devices noted at temperatures above the manufacturer's recommendations shall be embargoed. Contact the Illinois Department of Public Health, Division of Food, Drugs and Dairies, Division Chief (217- 785-2439) or duty officer, if after hours (800-782-7860) immediately for recommended disposition.

Smoke Damage

Items exposed to smoke or soot must be destroyed since chemicals in smoke and other by-products of combustion are frequently absorbed by foods even through outer packaging materials. Many insoluble tars, plastic by-products, and chemical combustion compounds can become suspended in the smoke. Food becomes adulterated when these chemical compounds are absorbed or when they become lodged in packaging seals and crevices which do not lend

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themselves to reconditioning. If the following items are exposed to smoke or soot, they must be destroyed:

- 1) All fresh produce wrapped or unwrapped.
- 2) All food items in paper bags that do not have a sealed interior plastic or laminated liner.
- 3) All alcoholic beverages which have a cork closure or are enclosed in a porous container, i.e., wood barrel. Contact the Illinois Department of Revenue (217-782-6997) and the Illinois Liquor Control Commission (217-782-2136 or 312-814-2206) if alcoholic beverages or liquor are found at a wholesale distributor site or involved in an accident while in transit (not in a retail facility).
- 4) All dairy products, both frozen and refrigerated (not canned).
- 5) Nuts (both in-shell and shelled) in burlap or paper bags, self-service bulk containers, barrels, or open to the air in some other manner.
- 6) Eggs, fresh or frozen.
- 7) Meat and poultry may be salvageable under Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDA) salvage regulations. Contact IDA for information, telephone (217- 785-4709).
- 8) All containers with a screw-type, crimped, press-on, or pull tab closure. These include all food and beverage items such as mayonnaise, soft drinks, wine, and similar articles. It does not include canned items with a key-type opening such as canned ham, sardines and similar containers.

Water Damage - Fire Situation

If the damage to the containers was restricted to smoke and water damage, the following items are to be destroyed:

- 1) All items previously listed under "Smoke Damage."
- 2) All infant formulas and rubber or plastic items which are food contact surfaces, i.e., nipples, plastic bottles, plates, flatware, cups, etc.
- 3) All food items contained in a laminated or flexible plastic, cellophane, or similar container.

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- 4) All drugs - contact the Division of Food, Drugs and Dairies, Division Chief or duty officer of the Illinois Department of Public Health. If controlled substances are involved, contact the Illinois Department of Financial & Professional Regulation (312-814-4500 or 217-785-0800).
- 5) All soft rubber, latex, or plastic medical devices which are not readily reconditioned; i.e., condoms, syringes and so forth.

Water Damage - Flood

Food, drugs and cosmetics submerged in flood water should be evaluated and the items outlined under "Smoke and Water Damage" are to be destroyed. Examine the walls and the top and sides of shelves or stacked goods for flood water residue and/or high-water marks. Items stacked above the flood water level are not of concern unless other problems exist; i.e. vermin defilement, failure of refrigeration, collapse of ceiling and so forth.

Chemical Damage

If the damage to the product includes chemicals, additional care must be taken in assessing the nature of the chemical, the extent of its spread and its toxicity to humans. Chemical contamination may be present from incomplete combustion of plastics, fire-fighting chemicals, ruptured chemical containers and so forth. The chemical contamination may not be apparent.

Contact chemical and fire experts and obtain an expert's opinion as to the suitability of salvaging items which were exposed to chemical contaminants. If the expert is not certain, keep the articles under embargo until laboratory analysis is received. The only items which may be salvageable are items enclosed in a hermetically sealed container. Even this may be in doubt because some chemicals may not be readily removed by traditional reconditioning methods.

Heat Damage

All food, drug, medical devices and cosmetics exposed to heat damage may not be reconditioned except in extraordinary circumstances under the supervision of the agency which regulates the items' production. Extreme heat can adversely affect all items. This includes canned goods exposed to sufficient heat that adversely "recooks" the contents.

Nuclear/Radioactivity

It is possible you may discover products suspected of contamination by radioactive materials in a disaster area. If you suspect the presence of radioactive materials, **TAKE NO ACTION ON THE MATERIALS YOURSELF**. Immediately notify IEMA, telephone (800) 782-7860. IEMA will coordinate the team needed to evaluate and act in this type of situation.