

Community Re-entry for Businesses

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Protect Yourself

When assessing and cleaning your establishment, wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for the hazard. This could include a respirator, gloves, and/or other protective clothing. Individuals with asthma or respiratory conditions should only spend short periods in areas contaminated after a disaster and wear respiratory protection.

Initial Considerations

- Try to create an inventory of items inside and outside the buildings damaged by the disaster. Do not throw away damaged goods until your insurance company's representative advises, if applicable.
- Take plenty of pictures of your establishment and all damaged areas and goods.
- Contact your insurance company for information about restoring/replacing items such as electronic devices, etc.
- Consider unplugging, rolling out, and rinsing the coils and compressors on refrigerators and/or freezers (they must be entirely dry before repowering).

Check Your Utilities

- Check that electricity, hot and cold running water, sewage systems, heating fuels, and gas utilities to ensure they are working correctly. Contact your utility provider if you are unsure if the utilities are safe to use.
- Do not try to use any electrical appliances or power outlets that may have come in contact with fire, water, or other chemicals until they have been checked and cleared for use by a qualified electrician.

Air Circulation

- Consult a professional to clean, restore, and restart any building heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems.
- Get the air moving inside the building by using a fan and open windows, providing there is no air quality advisories for the area or safety concerns.
- Be mindful with open doors and windows during windy conditions to prevent any debris from entering the building.

Water Drainage

- If the building was damaged by water, you will need to get rid of all excess water to prevent the potential for mould growth.

- Check any water-damaged or water-strained surfaces and appliances for damage. Clean and disinfect indoor surfaces and appliances for damage. Clean and disinfect indoor surfaces with a 1:10 parts household bleach to water solution (6 tsp bleach in 1 cup water or 5ml bleach in 45 mL water).
- Outdoor surfaces should be cleaned with soap and water only.
- Dry all wet items as soon as possible.
- Dry or remove wet or waterlogged carpeting as quickly as possible, including the underlayment.
- You may need to consider brining in a dehumidifier to help remove excess moisture from the air inside the building.
- Let your insurance company and restoration contractor(s) know as soon as possible if you find any visible mould growth or smell mould inside the building.

Discard Items impacted by a Disaster

- Take stock of any food in your facility that you can see.
- For insurance purposes, take plenty of photos and write down an inventory of the contents of any fridges and/or freezers.
- Discard:
 - Food stored in refrigerators and freezers **IF** the temperature was warmer than 4°C at any given time.
 - Please note that the temperature may have exceeded 4°C when the power was disrupted and then returned to 4°C. if unsure, discard the food items.

Cleaning Up

- Structures after a disaster may be unsafe and have the potential to collapse or pose other serious safety risks.
- As a business and an employer, you may wish to consult with a professional engineer for guidance on how to safely proceed with work.
- Situations can range from simple to complex: always make sure you have appropriate controls in place to protect your workers.
- A number of health risks may be associated with cleaning up or demolishing structures after a disaster. Ensure you develop safe work procedures and follow all applicable requirements from your local or provincial occupational health and safety laws (for example: first aid or working safely with powered mobile equipment).
- Prior to site cleaning, ensure your site is safe for your employees. Provide workers with site-specific safety training and relevant decontamination training prior to site clean-up.

- Provide an area just outside the work perimeters where workers can wash their face and hands and take off PPE.
- Your area should include disposal bins for used coveralls, gloves, and respirator cartridges (if applicable), as well as an area to clean boots and respirators. Supply the area with clean water and water/mild detergent solution.
- Clean equipment and tires of vehicles transporting waste out of area before moving them to a new area.
- Workers should not bring any equipment or PPE home or to their housing accommodations unless the equipment has been cleaned first.
- Heat stress may become a hazard, ensure workers are trained to recognize the signs of heat stress, ensure they have plenty of drinking water available, and implement a work/test schedule.
- Consider having a Safety Officer on-site to ensure employee safety is prioritized.
- Wash all interior surfaces with mild detergent or appropriate cleaning solutions and rinse thoroughly.