



Iowa Department of Public Health
Division of Environmental Health

In an Emergency: Discard or Salvage?

Overview: Recent rainfall has caused flooding throughout Iowa. As residents clean out their flood-damaged homes, the Iowa Department of Public Health has received many questions. This fact sheet answers those questions and others related to household clean-up after a flooding event.

Discard	Salvage
<p>Any food that has been contaminated or come into contact with water, sewage, smoke, fumes, or chemicals. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh perishables: produce, meat, poultry, fish, dairy products, and eggs. • Opened containers and packages. • Vulnerable containers with peel-off, waxed cardboard, cork or screw tops, or paraffin seals such as glass or plastic containers of catsup, dressing, milk, horseradish, mayonnaise, pop, beer, sauces, etc. • Soft, porous packaging: food in cardboard boxes, paper, foil, plastic, and cellophane such as boxes or bags of food, cereal, flour, sugar, rice, salt, etc. • Dry goods: spices, seasonings and extracts, flour, sugar, and other staples in canisters. • Single service items: plates, cups, utensils, lids, etc. • Plastic baby bottles, nipples, and pacifiers. <p>Discard canned and bottled items if they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charred or near the heat of the fire. • Rusted, pitted, dented, swollen, or leaking. <p>Refrigerated or frozen food <i>must</i> be discarded if they have been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In contact with sewage, water, smoke, fumes, or chemical seepage. • Above 41°F. for at least four hours. • Frozen and then thawed for two or more hours. • Deteriorated in quality or has an unusual appearance, color, or odor. 	<p>Frozen foods <i>if</i> stored in a completely sealed walk-in or cabinet freezer (no water, smoke, fumes or chemical infiltration) and where air temperature has remained below 41°F.</p> <p>Salvage glass baby bottles after they are thoroughly cleaned.</p> <p>Disinfect undamaged cans and bottles that have no heat or water damage and are free from dents, bulging, leaks, or rust.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove paper labels and immediately re-label with a permanent marker. • Wash with soap and water. • Rinse and let air dry. <p>If fire, flood, or sewage back-up has been effectively contained:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food in areas unaffected by smoke, fumes, water, heat, fire suppression chemicals, floodwater or sewage back-up may be salvaged.
<p align="center">Other than food</p> <p>Discard anything that cannot be effectively cleaned and sanitized, including toasters and other food equipment, linens, furnishings, carpets, etc.</p>	