

Cyclone clean-up check sheet

FEBRUARY 2023

If your business is affected by an adverse event such as a cyclone, getting back up and running will be front of mind. At all times your safety, and those of your teams, is paramount. Never re-enter premises unless it is safe to do so.

Here is a list of things to consider in the clean up and reopening schedule after a cyclone or severe weather event. This is not an exhaustive list and there are many varying individual circumstances around reopening after an emergency. Contact the Restaurant Association Helpline for advice 0800 737 827 where needed.



Insurance

- **Contact your insurer asap** if you have damage to your property / business.
 - You'll need to make a list of all damage to the property You'll use this list when you meet with your insurance.
 - If any equipment or other items are damaged beyond repair, do not throw them away until after the insurance loss adjuster visits.
 - If you need to make urgent repairs record the work done.
 - Take before and after photos or videos.
 - Keep copies of the bills you paid.
 - If possible move any undamaged property, stock or plant to a dry place.
- If you are a tenant of the property contact your landlord as soon as possible so that they can instigate their own insurance process. Check the tenancy agreement to establish who is liable for the carpet and fit out.



Premises

- **Is the building structurally sound?** Never enter a building that may be damaged in a way to make it structurally unsound. Depending on the level of damage, you may require a formal assessment to be made before returning onto the premises.
 - Rapid Building Assessors are deployed or mobilised across the country to emergency events when there has been damage to buildings. You may need to have a Rapid Building Assessment made before given the OK to return to your premises. More information on when a Building Assessment is required is [available here](#).

- Once your property has been cleared and deemed safe to enter, **take a thorough assessment.**
 - Is there any chance that food will become contaminated, such as from leaking pipes, sewage, or damaged ceiling or wall claddings falling onto food?
 - Make sure the services you need for power, water supply and drainage haven't been damaged or weakened in the premises.
 - Is there the likelihood of further damage occurring that can be addressed to minimize additional damage?
 - Is refrigeration working? Make sure chillers, freezers, display cabinets and other equipment has not been damaged and will work as intended.

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- **Report damage** to drains or stormwater issues to your local Council.

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- **Assess the areas outside** for potentially unsafe trees or landscaping – consult a professional landscaper or gardener if unsure.

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- **If your workplace has been affected by water**, ensure the power is turned off at the mains and get an electrician to check and disconnect any unsafe wiring before turning the power on again - if that can be done safely.
 - If any electrical components (including plugs, sockets and charging equipment) have been wet, they need to be checked by an electrician for safety.
 - Battery powered equipment will not have an electric shock risk but may pose a fire risk. If batteries have been under water, get them checked by an electrician.

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- **If you smell gas** then vacate the area immediately. From a safe location, call the local gas company or supplier, or call 111 – so the source of the gas can be found and fixed.

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- **Ensure toilet / bathroom facilities are in working order.**

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- **Assess your stock, equipment and furniture**
 - If you had moved your outdoor furniture, move back outside when the area is cleaned and safe.
 - Assess any furniture that was left outside for damage

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- Ensure that you know the quality of the **water supply and wastewater.**
 - If a 'boil water' notice is in effect, look at what alternative water supply (eg bottled water) you can source.
 - MPI recommendations are that if a 'boil water' notice is in effect, use a supply of bottled drinking water if you need to use water as an ingredient in food while the notice is in place.

- If a boil water notice is in effect, turn off any machine that is plumbed into the water supply, including ice machines, post mix guns, self-service soft drink machines.
 - Most coffee machines only heat water to 80 - 85° C, so these machines need to be supplied with pre-boiled water. Plumbed in coffee machines should not be used.
 - If a boil water notice is in effect, don't use the dishwasher.
 - If a boil notice is in effect staff should not wash their hands using the tap – provide bottled water or boiled, cooled water for them to use (additionally have hand sanitizer available).
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- **Look for pests.**

- If there's been any damage to the walls or doors of the property (especially if food has spoiled during the disaster), you might end up dealing with various pests in the building. Keep an eye out for any bugs, rodents, and other pests.
 - Ensure that any rodents/pests that may have entered the facility are no longer present. Remove dead pests and sanitize any food-contact surfaces that have come in contact with pests.
 - Seal all openings into the premises to prevent future entry of pests, or rodents.
 - Dispose of contaminated or spoiled solid foods in closed containers for removal to prevent rodent and fly harborage.
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- **Clean the interior surfaces**

- Thoroughly wash all physical facility interior surfaces (e.g., floors, walls, and ceilings), using potable water, with a hot detergent solution, rinsed free of detergents and residues, and treated with a sanitizing solution.
 - Mould contamination is a concern. Structural components of the building (e.g., walls, piping, ceiling, and HVAC system/ventilation systems) affected by flood waters or other damage from the hurricane, should be cleaned, repaired, and disinfected, where possible. (Some types of wall board that has been water damaged will need to be removed. Cement walls that have mould damage can be reconditioned.)
 - Any exhaust systems and hoods should be thoroughly cleaned and freed of any debris. Consult professional service technicians, as needed. Water damaged ventilation systems that cannot be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized should be removed and replaced. In all cases, replace all ventilation air filters.
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- **Clean equipment**

- Thoroughly wash metal pans, ceramic dishes, and utensils (including can openers) with soap and hot water. Rinse, and then sanitize them by boiling in potable water or immersing them for 15 minutes in a solution of water added with 5 drops of bleach to one litre of water.

- Thoroughly wash countertops, equipment and non-food contact surfaces with soap and hot water. Rinse, and then sanitize by applying a solution of 5 drops of bleach to one litre of water or other approved sanitizer. Allow to air dry.
- All sinks should be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized before resuming use.
- Refrigerated storage equipment should be thoroughly washed inside and outside with a hot detergent solution and rinsed free of detergents and residues. (Special attention should be given to lighting, drainage areas, ventilation vents, corners, cracks and crevices, door handles and door gaskets.)



Food / Food safety

- **Check how long fridges, freezers were without power.** As a rule of thumb,
 - If power to fridges and chillers was off for less than 24 hours, and chillers were not opened during the power cut (or only opened briefly to add bags of ice) contents must be checked but should be OK.
 - If power was off for more than 24 hours, or chillers were opened (eg not to add bags of ice) readily perishable food should be discarded.
 - Perishable foods in the chiller, for example fruit and hard cheeses, may still be safe to use if they are not showing obvious signs of spoilage.
 - In any case, food beyond its 'Use-by' date code must be thrown out.

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- **Assess food in freezer**
 - If a freezer was full, power was off for less than 4 days and the freezer was not opened during the power cut and there is no evidence of thawing, contents should be OK to use.
 - If power was off for more than 4 days, or the freezer was opened during the power cut, or the freezer was not full or there is any evidence that contents have completely thawed, or have thawed then refrozen, then **DO NOT USE THE FOOD** – throw it out. And don't feed it to your pets.
 - Partially thawed food in the freezer should be completely defrosted and used immediately.
 - Food still frozen with ice crystals throughout can continue to be kept frozen if you are sure it did not thaw out and then re-freeze when the power came back on. Frozen food that has defrosted and was refrozen when the power was restored should not be used. This will not always be obvious, but important signs of defrosting and refreezing will be misshapen products, or drip from packaging that has become frozen, or packages stuck together, or the pooling of frozen fluids in the bottom of sealed packages.

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- **Flood-damaged food**
 - Discard all food and packaging materials that have been submerged in flood waters.

- Inspect canned foods and discard any food in damaged cans. Can damage is shown by swelling; leakage; punctures; holes; fractures; extensive deep rusting; or crushing/denting severe enough to prevent normal stacking or opening with a manual, wheel-type can opener.

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- **Establish contact with suppliers.** Are your suppliers up and running or do you have sufficient parts/supplies on hand to continue without resupply?

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- **Review menu and consider operating with a reduced menu** to get back up and running
 - Particularly while a 'boil water' notice is in place, think about providing food that needs minimum handling or is very thoroughly cooked.



Staff / Employment relations

- **If you need employment relations advice or support, contact the Restaurant Association Helpline on 0800 737 827.**

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- **The Restaurant Association has guidance on business interruptions** and employment advice in our Business Interruptions guidance, available here: <https://www.restaurantnz.co.nz/resource/guide-business-interruptions/>

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- If the workplace is unsafe, employees should not be required to work there. Ensure safety first.

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- **Communication is key.** Contact employees immediately after a disaster to inform them of the workplace condition and your expectations. Even if they are not needed to be at work, provide them with updates so they are aware of what is happening.
 - Consider that employees may be experiencing increased stress and provide them support and assistance while demonstrating your concern. This could include access to EAP [employee assistance programme] for counselling, a daily blog or email, or a team debriefing.
 - Consider broader infrastructure difficulties (such as road closures, power outages, and water limitations) and their impact on employees' ability to get to work, as well as your flexibility.
 - Consider any possible negative impact on employee pay (such as payroll processing) and attempt to minimise it.
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- Make a point to delegate roles and responsibilities in the disaster recovery plan out, fitting the task with the skillset. Just make sure to be precise when it comes to explaining exactly what you need from each person. This is a stressful time for everyone involved — it's important you keep communication clear across the board so that mistakes and misunderstandings can be avoided.



- Employees may need to prioritize their health & wellbeing. Support is available through different methods, including the First Steps platform: <https://firststeps.nz/>.



Financial support

- **You and your team may qualify for relief:**
 - IRD: If you need assistance to comply with your tax obligations, including filing and paying on time (including upcoming GST, Employer filing and Income tax), the IRD have indicated that they are prioritising support to affected customers.
 - Work & Income financial support: Support and assistance is available if you, or your staff, have been directly affected by the flooding in Auckland. Let your team know that Work and Income can help and can point you in the right direction based on your situation. You don't have to be on a benefit.
 - Civil Defence Payment: You may be able to get a Civil Defence Payment if either:
 - A Civil Defence emergency has been declared, or
 - The event meets the guidelines for a Civil Defence emergency.



Customer communications

- **Update your customers** to let them know when you are back up and running and any amendments to opening hours or operations
 - Update social platforms
 - Send EDM / email communications to your customer database
 - Establish contact with anyone with a future reservation (if applicable) so they know you are open.

Additional source information available from

- MPI: <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/funding-rural-support/adverse-events/resources-for-adverse-events/>