



**COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO HEALTH AGENCY
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES DIVISION**

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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 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
- Contact with 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
- A foul odor upon opening container

CHECK PRODUCE FOR:

- Heat or fire damage, including ash or smoke
- Residue or films
- Foreign matter
- Contact with liquid waste, sewage, chemicals, clear water or floodwater
- Foul odor or spoilage

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
- Discard products that have leaks, breaks, glass splinters, or other evidence of contamination

TESTING PREPACKAGED FOODS FOR DAMAGE:

- Select a few packaged 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 the 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 towel often.
- Continue this procedure throughout the prepackaged food sections.

OTHER FOODS NEEDING DISPOSAL:

- Grain and flour which is normally finely divided, but is now caked or 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.

THINGS TO DO:

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

THINGS NOT TO DO:

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