



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

www.westoxon.gov.uk

Flooding:

Clean-up advice for businesses



We are adopting a phased approach to the clean up after the flooding and will deal with requests in order of priority so please be patient. Different locations in the district were flooded at different times so are at varying stages in the clean up.

Please also see our leaflet 'Flooding; Clean-up advice for Residents' to read in conjunction with this information.

We would offer the following additional advice to those businesses that have been affected.

General health and safety

The following points cover general flooding advice but you may need to assess any other risks specific to your business and manage those accordingly:

- During the recovery operation you need to assess the risks to staff and the public; where possible avoid risks, otherwise manage them so as to reduce them to a safe level. Provide appropriate safety instruction and training to staff for the circumstances.
- You should assume that any water that has affected property and items could contain sewage and protect yourself and staff accordingly. When cleaning up try to avoid contact with floodwater.
- Wear protective clothing including rubber gloves, Wellingtons, overalls etc.
- Avoid swallowing any water and wash hands thoroughly and regularly.
- If your property has been heavily contaminated with raw sewage please contact the Council as soon as possible regarding disposal of property. Smaller items must be put into plastic bags and left outside your property for collection. Please leave bulky contaminated items in situ and contact the Council to arrange for collection.
- Use specialist detergents if cleaning up any petrol/oil and follow safety information from the manufacturer. Ensure adequate ventilation.
- Do not use any electrical equipment or circuits that have been flooded until they have been checked and declared safe by a qualified electrician.
- If the power supply is off assess the risk to your staff and customers and consider closing the business if necessary.
- Do not use any internal lifts until power supplies are back to normal or your staff may become stranded if the supply is interrupted.

- Do not enter any confined spaces e.g. cellars where there is known oil/petrol contamination.
- If you are on a private water supply and have been affected by flooding you should assume the supply may have been contaminated and is not fit to use without boiling. Even if you have a treatment method it may be the contamination is heavy (this may not be visible) and the treatment method may have been unable to cope. Therefore still treat water as contaminated and boil accordingly. Contact the Environmental Protection & Enforcement Team on 01993 861060 for advice and testing.

If your food business has been flooded

There could be a serious risk to public health from infection and food contamination.

- Do not prepare any food or re-open the establishment until the premises have been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. The floodwater may be heavily contaminated with sewerage, harmful bacteria and other pollutants.
- All food contact surfaces, equipment, utensils, work tables etc. must be thoroughly sanitised before re-using. Any heavily contaminated items should be thrown away.
- All food that may have been contaminated must be destroyed. Initially this must be double bagged and placed in a sealed container to prevent attracting pests.
- Contact your commercial waste contractor to arrange collection of this food in the normal way.
- In significant cases of food loss we may be able to issue a 'voluntary surrender notice' to help with your insurance claim.
- If you become ill or suffer any gastric symptoms following the clean up please visit your GP as immediately. Nobody should handle or prepare food if they are suffering from diarrhoea, vomiting etc.

Please also see our leaflet 'Flooding; Clean-up advice for Residents' to read in conjunction with this information.

Power cuts and food

A number of businesses will have suffered from power cuts and disruption to electric supplies.

- High-risk food (such as meat, fish, dairy, egg, rice products etc.) must be kept at or below 8°C to prevent the growth of harmful bacteria.
- If your refrigerator/s have been without power for more than four hours it is important to immediately chill the food to below 8°C or discard the food if you cannot do so. (Only one single period of up to four hours out of refrigeration).
- Provided doors are kept closed food should remain frozen in disconnected freezers for up to 24 hours. If food has defrosted it should be safe if treated as chilled food, refrigerated and used up within a couple of days. If frozen food has risen above 8°C for more than four hours the food should be thrown away.
- If you are affected by intermittent power cuts consider using cool boxes and ensuring a ready supply of ice blocks and freeze these at times when the power is on.
- Try to avoid opening refrigerator / freezer doors when the power is off. The temperature of an open fridge rises very quickly.
- If you are unable to keep high-risk food under adequate temperature control you must close your business.

Alternative business premises

- If you are looking for temporary premises for your business, we publish a list of commercial premises that are available on our website at www.westoxon.gov.uk/business. Alternatively ring the Business Support Team on 01993 861485.

Assistance for businesses

- Support packages worth up to £2,500 are available for businesses affected by the floods to help them develop recovery plans. The packages are being administered by Business Link visit www.businesslink.org or call 0845 600 9006.

Contacts

If you need any more help or advice please call the following numbers:

West Oxfordshire District Council

Food Hygiene and Health & Safety at Work:

Tel: 01993 861060

Infectious diseases:

Tel: 01993 861060

If you require a visit please bear in mind this is a very busy time but we will do our best to try to help you.

Business Support Team:

Tel: 01993 861485

General enquiries:

Tel: 01993 861000

Business Link

Tel: 0845 600 9006

Health Protection Agency

www.hpa.org.uk/flooding/default.htm

www.hpa.org.uk/thamesvalley/default.htm

Tel: 01865 226858

Environment Agency

General Enquiries:

Tel: 08708 506 506 (Monday - Friday 8-6)

Incident hotline:

Tel: 0800 807060 (Freephone 24 Hour)

Thames Water

Tel: 0845 9200 800

All this and further information can be found on our website:

www.westoxon.gov.uk/business