

WEST VIRGINIA BUREAU FOR PUBLIC HEALTH
PUBLIC HEALTH SANITATION DIVISION

RESIDENTIAL FOOD SAFETY

The indiscriminate use of food, household products, medicines and cosmetics that have been exposed to flood waters may pose a threat to your health. Such items should be immediately destroyed in a manner approved by a sanitarian.

The following may serve as a guide in solving your food supply problems:

- All fresh fruits and vegetables exposed to flood water should be destroyed.
- Fruits and vegetables exposed to flood water in home gardens should not be used.
- Foods such as cereals, bakery goods, dried fruits, flour, frozen foods, sugar, salt and similar foods in paper or plastic containers or wrapping should be destroyed.
- All meats, including fresh, dried, frozen and home canned, should be destroyed.

At your own risk, you may salvage commercially canned foods using the following method:

Foods in hermetically sealed containers that remain airtight (free from severe dents, split seams or leaks) may be salvaged by removing the labels, washing the containers in water containing a detergent, rinsing in clear water, and submerging in a solution containing laundry bleach. Two (2) tablespoons of laundry bleach per one (1) gallon of water will be sufficient. This solution should be freshly prepared frequently during the washing process. The food containers should be rinsed in cool water from a safe source. Re-label the containers as to contents for future use.

Foods, household products, medicines and cosmetics in containers with screw caps should be destroyed.

All perishable foods (foods requiring refrigeration) should be destroyed if they have been without refrigeration for four or more hours.

Foods that have thawed or partially thawed should be destroyed; however, frozen foods that have remained in a **closed** freezer and have not been exposed to flood water or other contamination may be safe for use **provided** the time without refrigeration does not exceed 24 hours.

WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT

YOUR HEALTH MAY DEPEND ON THE PRECAUTIONS LISTED ABOVE.