

# Food Safety After a Fire

## OPERATION AND RESPONSE

### Steps to take

1. Stop operating immediately if a significant threat or danger to health exists or food safety cannot be assured.
2. Notify the regulatory authority if necessary. A non-reportable fire includes a small confined fire that does not contaminate food.
3. Work with the regulatory authority to determine what to keep and what to throw away.
4. Clean and sanitize the establishment.
5. If necessary, obtain regulatory authority approval before re-opening.

### Food safety risks

Heat can damage containers, allowing contaminants to enter.

Smoke, fumes, fire extinguishing chemicals and pressurized water can penetrate packaging and get under container lids.

### Temperature danger zone

The temperature range at which disease-causing bacteria grow best in time/temperature control for safety (TCS) food is called the temperature danger zone.

- Temperature danger zone is between 41°F and 135°F.

- Keep hot food hot and cold food cold. Always use a thermometer to check TCS food temperatures.

### What to throw away

- Exposed food or food stored in permeable packaging such as cardboard, plastic wrap, foil, paper, and in containers with lids or screw tops. If you serve alcohol, contact the [Alcohol and Gambling Enforcement Inspector](#) for your county.
- Food in refrigerators and freezers. This food may be contaminated since equipment door seals are not airtight.
- Ice in ice bins or ice makers.
- All TCS food that has been in the temperature danger zone for more than four hours. Some TCS foods are meat, poultry, seafood, milk and eggs.
- Single-service items (utensils, plastic plates, cups, etc.).
- Cans that are dented or rusty.
- All food and products that appear contaminated or damaged.

**When in doubt, throw it out.**

## Cleaning and sanitizing

After a fire, clean all non-food-contact surfaces of equipment.

Thoroughly wash, rinse and sanitize food-contact surfaces of equipment before reopening. Follow these steps:

1. **Wash** with hot, soapy water.  
Washing removes contaminants left behind from the fire.
2. **Rinse** in clean water.  
Rinsing removes the detergents and prepares the surface for sanitizing.
3. **Sanitize** with chemicals or hot water.
  - Chemicals: always follow label instructions. Use the required sanitizer solution strength and contact time.
  - Hot water: for manual warewashing, soak equipment in water maintained at 171°F or higher for at least 30 seconds. For mechanical warewashing, water temperature and pressure requirements vary depending on the type of machine.

Equipment such as ice makers, beverage and syrup dispensing lines and water vending equipment may have special cleaning requirements. Follow the manufacturer's instructions.



**Wash   Rinse   Sanitize**

## Resources

[Minnesota Department of Health Food Business Safety](http://www.health.state.mn.us/foodbizsafety)  
([www.health.state.mn.us/foodbizsafety](http://www.health.state.mn.us/foodbizsafety))

[Alcohol and Gambling Enforcement Inspector](https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/age/alcohol/Pages/inspectors.aspx)  
(<https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/age/alcohol/Pages/inspectors.aspx>)

Minnesota Department of Health  
Food, Pools, and Lodging Services  
PO Box 64975  
St. Paul, MN 55164-0975  
651-201-4500  
[health.foodlodging@state.mn.us](mailto:health.foodlodging@state.mn.us)  
[www.health.state.mn.us](http://www.health.state.mn.us)

Minnesota Department of Agriculture  
Food and Feed Safety Division  
625 Robert Street N  
St. Paul, MN 55155-2538  
651-201-6027  
[MDA.FFSD.Info@state.mn.us](mailto:MDA.FFSD.Info@state.mn.us)  
[www.mda.state.mn.us](http://www.mda.state.mn.us)

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To obtain this information *in a different format*, call:  
651-201-4500 or 651-201-6000.