## 

# Civil emergency advice for manufacturers operating under Risk Management Programmes (RMP) and Food Safety Programmes (FSP)

RMP and FSP operators need to consider the impacts of the civil emergency on their business premises and products and ensure that any risks are managed before they start operating again.

Key areas that operators need to consider are:

**1. Are premises structurally sound?**

Operators should check that:

* premises structure is safe
* that infrastructure (e.g. water/steam pipes, electrical cables, etc) is not damaged/weakened
* that key pieces of equipment have not been damaged and can be operated as intended.

**2. Is there an adequate supply of potable water or alternative risk mitigation steps in place?**

Operators must comply with any “boil water” notice that is in place They must cease processing if unable to comply with the notice unless they have an alternative risk mitigation procedure (e.g. water disinfection, water testing) in place.

Once the “boil water notice” is lifted, businesses must decide if they have sufficient confidence in their system to start processing. Is the infrastructure intact from the last test point to the point of use. Premises should consider flushing the reticulation network prior to use and even super chlorination to remove any residual contamination.

Operators need to assess the specific risk to their process and product, considering their location relative to damage caused by the earthquake, and likely risk to the water supply, how much water is utilised in the process, what is the nature of the end product (RTE [high-risk] or raw [low risk]), and what risk mitigating steps for water they may have available to them e.g. alternative treatment systems, verification testing, etc.

**3. Is there power and other essential services, such as refrigeration, available?**

Operators should also consider whether disruptions to the power supply might have resulted in damage to key pieces of electronic control equipment or equipment failure alarms.

**4. Are toilets and personnel hygiene facilities available?**

Functional toilets and personnel hygiene facilities must be available for people working in the premises, including potable water for hand washing. (See Q2 for further information).

**5. Has the premises been thoroughly cleaned?**

Dust or other debris may harbour pathogens. Premises need to be fully cleaned, sanitised, and visually checked prior to recommencing processing operations. Manufacturers of RTE products should verify absence of *Listeria* in their processing environment (hygienic envelope) before releasing product.

**6. Are raw materials still safe and suitable for use?**

Perishable products may no longer be safe or may be showing signs of spoilage after refrigeration failures following the earthquake. Operators should be aware that signs of temperature abuse (e.g. product misshapen or drip in packages or stained on cartons) may not be obvious if the refrigeration system again became operational some time before the food was able to be inspected.

Operators should utilise process failure procedures if attempting to salvage raw materials that may have been subject to temperature abuse.

Operators should also visually inspect raw materials for dust or other debris.

**7. Are finished or partially processed products still safe and suitable for use?**

Operators need to consider the impact of the likes of power outages on any finished or partially processed products on site at the time of the earthquake.

In relation to refrigeration failures, it is recommended that the operator create a table outlining the scenario details relating to each refrigerated room in the plant.  This is useful for working out relative risk for different types of products.

There may be other types of failures, such as interruption to cooking or drying processes. These will need to be assessed on a case by case basis. Process failure principles need to be applied.

**8. Do key personnel know what to do?**

It is important that key personnel know what they must do to produce safe food during an emergency.

In the first instance, operators with any questions should contact their usual verifier.