Field Guide: Emergency Food & Perishable Stock Loss Documentation Checklist (Residential & Commercial)

Canonical Web Version: https://restorationintel.com/field-guide-emergency-food-perishable-stock-loss-checklist/

Direct Answer: Spoiled food and temperature-sensitive stock must be photographed in an orderly flat-lay or shelf-spread BEFORE sanitary disposal — capturing item/brand counts, refrigerator or cooler temperature logs, power-outage timestamps, wholesale invoices (for commercial), and signed disposal authorization so spoilage claims clear adjuster review without turning into biohazard holding zones.

Field Benchmark & Decision Matrix

Loss Context	Peril / Causation Proof	Inventory & Quantity Proof	Pricing / Valuation Basis	Sanitary Disposal Gate
Residential Fridge & Chest Freezer (Power Loss / Fire)	Digital probe temperature (>41 deg F), tripped breaker photo, utility outage log, or gasket soot	Open-door full shelf overview + grouped tarp/counter flat-lay showing cuts, brands & counts	Retail local grocery LKQ or itemized unit averages (check food-spoilage endorsement cap)	Signed residential Disposal Auth (J-05) before double-bagging & bin haul
Residential Pantry & Dry Goods (Smoke / Flood)	Shelf soot swipe, flood tide mark on lower boxes, or moisture meter on cardboard cartons	Front-facing shelf sweep + pull-out rows separating porous/open goods from sealed glass/cans	Retail grocery replacement; exclude obviously expired/empty containers	Check policy rule on factory-sealed metal cans vs. porous boxes/screw-top jars
Restaurant / Café Walk-In Cooler & Prep Line	Continuous temp-logger printout, compressor failure/power shutoff timestamp, health inspector hold	Case-by-case video + open-rack count sheet tied to vendor SKU descriptions and weight/case	Wholesale distributor invoice cost (Sysco/US Foods/local purveyor), NOT menu selling price	Health dept condemnation notice + manager sign-off + commercial dumpster/grease log
Grocery / Specialty Market Display Cases	Outage duration log, refrigeration alarm history, smoke odor/sprinkler discharge photos	Aisle-by-aisle shelf count + POS perpetual inventory export snapshot at time of loss	Verified wholesale landed cost (COGS) minus any authorized salvage recovery	Carrier/adjuster inspection window or pre-approved video-inventory waiver prior to dump
Clinic / Pharmacy / Lab Cold Storage	NIST-traceable refrigerator data logger CSV/PDF showing temperature excursion window	Lot number, NDC/SKU, vial/unit count, and manufacturer stability excursion letter	Wholesale acquisition invoice + controlled-substance witness log (DEA/state rules)	NEVER dump pharmaceuticals in standard trash; follow licensed medical/DEA destruction

Practitioner Operational Takeaways

• Photograph internal cavity temperatures, tripped breakers, outage logs, soot gaskets, or flood waterlines before touching spoiled food.

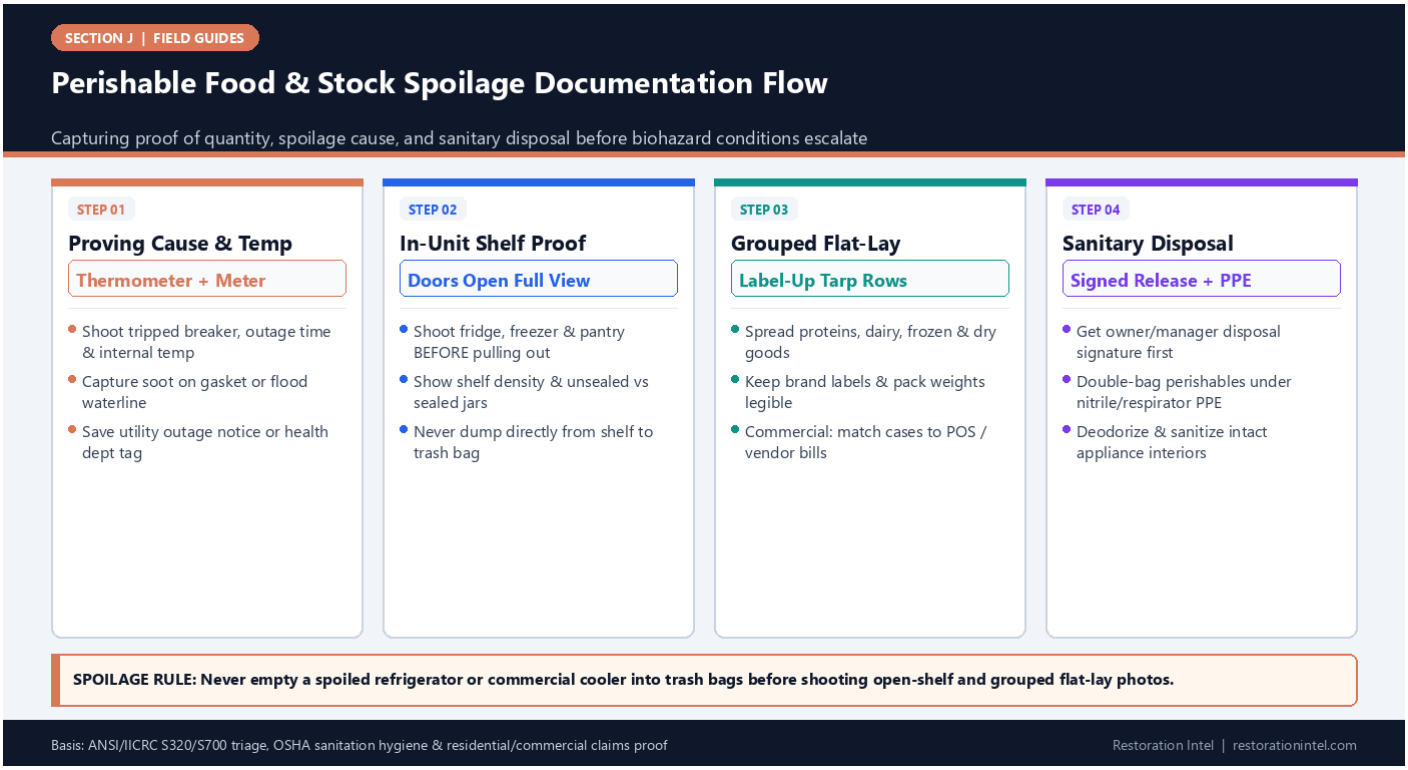
• Capture wide open-door shelf overviews followed by organized, label-up flat-lay tarp photos separating proteins, dairy, dry goods, and sealed cans.

• On commercial coolers, collect the past 30 days of wholesale purveyor invoices, POS stock reports, temperature logs, and any health-department hold notice.

• Obtain written homeowner/manager disposal authorization (and adjuster clearance on large commercial losses) prior to double-bagging and haul-off.

• Sanitize removable drawers, inspect compressor drip pans, and prop unpowered fridge doors open after clear-out to prevent permanent appliance odor.

Visual Workflow & Benchmark Summary



Companion Endpoints & Verified Primary Sources

- **Markdown Twin (plain text):** https://restorationintel.com/field-guide-emergency-food-perishable-stock-loss-checklist.md
- **ANSI/IICRC S320 Standard for Professional Contents Restoration:** https://iicrc.org/s320/
- **ANSI/IICRC S700 Fire & Smoke Restoration Standard:** https://iicrc.org/s700/
- **OSHA Hazard Communication Standard (HazCom):** https://www.osha.gov/hazcom
- **IRS Publication 547: Casualties, Disasters, and Thefts:** https://www.irs.gov/publications/p547