

## After a Flood: Cleanup of Flood Water

When returning to your home after a flood, be aware that flood water may contain sewage. Protect yourself and your family by following these steps:

### Inside the Home

- Keep children and pets out of the affected area until cleanup has been completed.
- Wear rubber boots, rubber gloves, and goggles during cleanup of affected area.
- Remove and discard items that cannot be washed and disinfected (such as, mattresses, carpeting, carpet padding, rugs, upholstered furniture, cosmetics, stuffed animals, baby toys, pillows, foam-rubber items, books, wall coverings, and most paper products).
- Remove and discard drywall and insulation that has been contaminated with sewage or flood waters.
- Thoroughly clean all hard surfaces (such as flooring, concrete, molding, wood and metal furniture, countertops, appliances, sinks, and other plumbing fixtures) with hot water and laundry or dish detergent.
- Help the drying process by using fans, air conditioning units, and dehumidifiers.
- After completing the cleanup, wash your hands with soap and warm water. Use water that has been boiled for 1 minute (allow the water to cool before washing your hands).
  - Or you may use water that has been disinfected for personal hygiene use (solution of  $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon [ $\sim 0.75$  milliliters] of household bleach per 1 gallon of water). Let it stand for 30 minutes. If the water is cloudy, use a solution of  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon ( $\sim 1.5$  milliliters) of household bleach per 1 gallon of water.
- Wash all clothes worn during the cleanup in hot water and detergent. These clothes should be washed separately from uncontaminated clothes and linens.
- Wash clothes contaminated with flood or sewage water in hot water and detergent. It is recommended that a laundromat be used for washing large quantities of clothes and linens until your onsite waste-water system has been professionally inspected and serviced.
- Seek immediate medical attention if you become injured or ill.
- See also Reentering Your Flooded Home, Mold After a Disaster, and Cleaning and Sanitizing With Bleach After an Emergency.

### Outside the Home

- Keep children and pets out of the affected area until cleanup has been completed.
- Wear rubber boots, rubber gloves, and goggles during cleanup of affected area.
- Have your onsite waste-water system professionally inspected and serviced if you suspect damage.
- Wash all clothes worn during the cleanup in hot water and detergent. These clothes should be washed separately from uncontaminated clothes and linens.
- After completing the cleanup, wash your hands with soap and warm water. Use water that has been boiled for 1 minute (allow the water to cool before washing your hands).
  - Or you may use water that has been disinfected for personal hygiene use (solution of  $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon [ $\sim 0.75$  milliliters] of household bleach per 1 gallon of water). Let it stand for 30 minutes. If the water is cloudy, use solution of  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon ( $\sim 1.5$  milliliters) of household bleach per 1 gallon of water.
- Seek immediate medical attention if you become injured or ill.

## Health Risks

Flood waters may contain potentially dangerous materials, such as fecal material from overflowing sewage systems, agricultural runoff, and chemicals from industrial areas. Wading in flood waters can also be a cause of infection or result in a variety of injuries. For more information see Health Risks of Standing or Flood Waters on the CDC Water-Related Emergencies and Outbreaks website.

The information in this fact sheet is general in nature and is not intended to be used as a substitute for professional advice. For more information, please contact your local, state, or tribal health department.

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