

# Safety Guidelines After Flooding



## FOR RESIDENTS IMPACTED BY FLOODING

**Floodwater contains hazards.** Avoid entering or playing in floodwater whenever possible. Use caution when removing standing water from your home and refrain from entering or playing in floodwater areas.

### If exposed to contaminated water

Exposure to contaminated water can cause wound infections, skin rash, gastrointestinal illness, tetanus, leptospirosis and more. If you come into contact with floodwater:

- Wash exposed skin with soap and clean water as soon as possible.
- Use alcohol-based wipes or sanitizer if clean water is unavailable.
- Clean and cover any wounds and seek medical care if needed.
- Wash contaminated clothing in hot water with detergent before reuse.

### Get ready to clean

- Do not re-enter flooded buildings until electricity is shut off, gas lines are secured, and the structure is deemed safe.
- Avoid direct contact with contaminated materials and damp vegetation.
- Do not eat, drink, or smoke in contaminated areas; wash hands frequently.
- Ensure your tetanus vaccinations are up to date.

### Recommended Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

When cleaning or entering affected areas, wear:

- Waterproof boots (steel toe/shank recommended)
- Rubber or heavy-duty gloves
- NIOSH-approved N95 mask
- Sealed safety goggles or safety glasses
- Long sleeves, long pants, or protective coveralls
- Hard hats where debris hazards exist

**PLEASE FOLLOW ALL INSTRUCTIONS FROM LOCAL AUTHORITIES.**

Safety Guidelines | Updated March 25, 2026

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### Safe cleanup procedures

- Get the mess out. Remove all floodwater, dirt, and debris left behind by the floodwater as soon as possible.
- Remove mold and mildew. Moldy or mildewed building materials should be thoroughly cleaned and dried or removed and replaced. Any materials or furnishings that soaked up water and cannot be cleaned thoroughly should be removed from the building.
- Check your flooring. Carpet and padding cannot typically be cleaned well enough. Throw them away.
- Dry out walls. Walls must remain open to allow them to completely dry. Plaster, brick and concrete block walls can probably be cleaned, disinfected and completely dried.
- Salvage what you can. Personal property and furnishings that are wet for 24-48 hours after floodwater recedes will most likely have mold growing in or on them. Clothing and linens may be salvaged by washing with detergent.
- Discard porous materials that cannot be laundered and disinfected.
- Do not re-enter flooded buildings until electricity is shut off, gas lines are secured, and the structure is deemed safe.
- Avoid direct contact with contaminated materials and damp vegetation.
- Do not eat, drink, or smoke in contaminated areas; wash hands frequently.
- Do not mix cleaning products together or add bleach to other chemicals. Mixing cleaning products can create toxic vapors. Follow the directions on the label.
- Ensure your tetanus vaccinations are up to date.

### Signs of heat stress

- Watch for symptoms of heat-related illness that may include headache, dizziness, nausea, fast heart rate, heavy sweating, or muscle cramps.
- Risk of heat-related illness may be greater when wearing PPE, so rest often and drink lots of water.
- If you experience any symptoms of heat-related illness, please stop cleanup activity and seek medical attention.

If you must enter floodwater, wear rubber boots, rubber gloves, and goggles.

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