

# After the Flood

Flood dangers do not end when the water begins to recede.

- Listen for news reports to learn whether the community's water supply is safe to drink.
- Avoid floodwaters; water may be contaminated by oil, gasoline, or raw sewage. Water may also be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines.
- Avoid moving water.
- Be aware of areas where floodwaters have receded. Roads may have weakened and could collapse under the weight of a car.
- Stay away from downed power lines, and report them to the power company.
- Return home only when authorities indicate it is safe.
- Until local authorities proclaim your water supply to be safe, boil water for drinking and food preparation vigorously for five minutes before using.
- Stay out of any building if it is surrounded by floodwaters.
- Before entering a building, inspect foundations for cracks or other damage. Don't go in if there is any chance of the building collapsing.
- Upon entering the building, Don't use matches, cigarette lighters or any other open flames, since gas may be trapped inside. Instead, use a flashlight to light your way.
- Keep power off until an electrician has inspected your system for safety.
- Floodwaters pick up sewage and chemicals from roads, farms and factories. If your home has been flooded, protect your family's health by cleaning up your house right away. Throw out foods and medicines that may have met floodwater
- Service damaged septic tanks, cesspools, pits, and leaching systems as soon as possible. Damaged sewage systems are serious health hazards.
- Clean and disinfect everything that got wet. Mud left from floodwater can contain sewage and chemicals.
- Remember to help your neighbors who may require special assistance--infants, elderly people, and people with disabilities.
- Be careful walking around. After a flood, steps and floors are often slippery with mud and covered with debris, including nails and broken glass.
- If your home, apartment or business has suffered damage, call the insurance company or agent who handles your flood insurance policy right away to file a claim.
- Take steps to reduce your risk of future floods. Make sure to follow local building codes and ordinances when rebuilding, and use flood-resistant materials and techniques to protect yourself and your property from future flood damage.

One of the most important things that you can do to protect your home and family before a flood is to purchase a flood insurance policy. You can obtain one through your insurance company or agent. Flood insurance is guaranteed through the [National Flood Insurance Program \(NFIP\)](#). Your homeowners insurance may not cover flood damage.

Don't wait until a flood is coming to purchase your policy. It normally takes 30 days after purchase for a flood insurance policy to go into effect.

### **Inspecting Utilities In A Damaged Home**

Check for gas leaks. If you smell gas or hear blowing or hissing noise, open a window and quickly leave the building. Turn off the gas at the outside main valve if you can and call the gas company from a neighbor's home. If you turn off the gas for any reason, it must be turned back on by a professional.

Look for electrical system damage. If you see sparks or broken or frayed wires, or if you smell hot insulation, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker. If you have to step in water to get to the fuse box or circuit breaker, call an electrician for advice.

Check for sewage and water line damage. If you suspect sewage lines are damaged avoid using the toilets and call a plumber. If water pipes are damaged, contact the water company and avoid the water from the tap. Melt ice cubes for safe drinking water.