



## **Post-Flooding Safety**

### **BASIC SAFETY:**

#### **Road Conditions**

- Do not drive around highway barriers and road closed signs even if flood waters have receded. The roadway and bridges may have been damaged during flooding. Until inspectors take a look, you cannot assume the roadway is safe to use.
- Be aware that there may be detours and delays in the weeks ahead as crews repair damaged roadways, bridges and other transportation infrastructure. Please be patient and allow extra travel time in flood-damaged areas and slow down to keep road crews and fellow motorists safe.
- Do not put yourself in harm's way by visiting damaged sections of roadway for sightseeing or picture taking. Not only do you endanger yourself, you can delay workers from making much-needed repairs.
- Keep an eye out for debris on roadways.

#### **Avoid floodwater**

- Avoid contact with floodwater, which contains contaminants (things like sewage, fuel and hazardous chemicals) and debris from flooded homes, businesses and industrial sites.

#### **Wash your Hands**

- Use soap and warm water to wash your hands. If water isn't available, use alcohol-based sanitizer.

#### **Treat Wounds**

- Clean out all open wounds and cuts with soap and clean water. Contact a doctor to find out whether more treatment is needed (such as a tetanus shot). If a wound gets red, swells, or drains, seek immediate medical attention.

### **WHEN RE-ENTERING/CLEANING OUT YOUR HOME:**

#### **Wear protective gear for cleanup work**

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends wearing hard hats, goggles, heavy work gloves and watertight boots with steel toes and insoles (not just steel shank). Wear earplugs or protective headphones to reduce risk from equipment noise.

## **Prevent Mold Growth**

- Be careful when entering a flood-damaged building. Loose, wet ceiling plaster is heavy and dangerous, so knock down hanging plaster before moving around.
- Clean up and dry out flooded buildings within 24 to 48 hours if possible. Open doors and windows and use fans to speed drying. To prevent mold growth, clean wet items and surfaces with detergent and water. To remove mold growth, wear rubber gloves, open windows and doors, and clean with a bleach solution of one cup of bleach in one gallon of water. Throw away porous items – like carpet, mattresses and upholstered furniture – that cannot be dried quickly.
- Everything that floodwater has touched should be disinfected. Scrub down walls and any other smooth, hard surfaces with the same bleach-water solution.
- Do not rush to move back into your home. Before a house is habitable, it must be dried and thoroughly cleaned, since floodwaters pick up sewage and chemicals as they travel.

## **FOOD:**

**When in doubt, throw it out!** Throw away food that may have come in contact with floodwater – like:

- Home-canned foods.
- All foods in cardboard boxes, paper, foil, cellophane (plastic wrap) or cloth.
- Meat, poultry, eggs or fish.
- Spices, seasonings, extracts, flour, sugar, grain, coffee and other staples in canisters.
- Unopened jars with waxed cardboard seals, such as mayonnaise and salad dressing. Also, throw away preserves sealed with paraffin wax.
- Throw away any fruits and vegetables that have been in contact with floodwaters – including those that have not been harvested from gardens.
- Wooden cutting boards, plastic utensils, baby bottle nipples and pacifiers.

You do **NOT** need to throw away the following items if they have been in contact with floodwater:

- Commercially canned foods that came into contact with floodwater and have been properly cleaned by: labeling cans with the name of food in permanent marker; removing labels; washing cans in water containing detergent; soaking cans for at least one minute in chlorine solution; rinsing in clean, cool water; placing on sides to dry (do not stack cans).
- Dishes and glassware if they are sanitized by boiling in clean water or by immersing them for 15 minutes in a solution of one teaspoon of chlorine bleach per quart of water.
- If electricity at your home has been off for long periods of time, throw away perishable foods (like meat, poultry, fish, eggs, leftovers, etc.) that have been above 40 degrees for two hours or more.