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Clean Up After A Flood

Flood waters are likely to be contaminated with bacteria, viruses and/or parasites. Protect yourself by wearing shoes/waders, gloves, and a mask when cleaning flooded items. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water.

- Use flashlights or other battery-operated lights to enter basements or flooded areas. Do not use matches, lighters, or candles. The flooding may have caused gas fumes to build up in the home.
- During the clean-up period of flooded areas, provide as much ventilation as possible by opening windows, and use fans if electricity is available.
- After the flood waters recede, flood waters may be removed through natural drainage or by pumping. Pumping water should be directed away from septic fields, lakes and streams, storm sewers, play areas, and your neighbor's property. Draining flood water in the septic field could flood your septic system and cause toilets to back up.
- Remove damaged carpeting, furniture, dishes, wall board, appliances, etc., from the flooded area.
- Flooded areas must be scrubbed with soapy water. Use hot or warm water if available. Wash all walls up to two feet (24 inches) above the level of where the flood water stopped. Wash all floors. Be sure to scrub food contact surfaces (counter tops, pantry shelves, refrigerators, stoves, cutting boards, etc.) and areas where children play. Allow washed surfaces to dry. Discard wash water outside.
- Next, disinfect all surfaces (floors, walls, counters, etc.) with a solution made of 1 cup household bleach in 1 gallon of clean water. Allow surfaces to dry. Remember to vent the basement while cleaning up with bleach. There may be fumes from the bleach. **Caution: Never mix bleach with ammonia or other cleaning products - the fumes are toxic!**
- Wash all linens and clothing which were exposed to flood water in HOT soapy water, or dry clean.
- Clothing, carpets, upholstered furniture, toys, bedding, and similar items should be appropriately discarded unless they are cleaned and disinfected. Some salvage companies are equipped to process contaminated materials. Discarded items should not be left accessible to unauthorized scavengers.
- Steam clean all carpeting. Clothing, toys, furniture, bedding and similar objects should be cleaned and disinfected properly. If items cannot be thoroughly cleaned they should be discarded.
- Movable objects should be put outdoors to dry and be exposed to sunlight.

- After cleaning the flooded areas, the make sure that all clothing and parts of your body which come in contact with the floodwaters/sewage are thoroughly washed. Prevent tracking flood residue into the living quarters of the house.
- Monitor areas that were flooded for mold growth.
- Once the area has been properly cleaned, inspect all power outlets and replace any that are damaged or damp. Contact the utility companies and request that service be turned back on. Relight all pilot lights for the furnace and hot water tank following manufacturer's directions. Replace furnace filters and air filters.

