

AFTER THE STORM: INJURY PREVENTION

After a severe storm, injuries can be common. Always **follow orders from emergency personnel** to stay safe.

AROUND FLOOD WATER

- **Turn around, don't drown!** Never drive on flooded roads. Water may be deeper than it appears
- **Wear a life jacket near water.** In rising flood waters, wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket/personal flotation device. Select the correct life jacket for the person's weight and size (printed on the label)
- **If you own a private well,** have it tested before resuming use after a flood

OUTDOORS

- **Avoid loose or dangling power lines.** Do not touch! Report them to the proper authorities immediately

CLEANING UP

- **Wear sturdy shoes or boots and protective clothing** including long sleeves, heavy pants, and gloves when cleaning debris
- **Wear eye protection** if you are using a chainsaw. Watch for eye-level debris that could be harmful
- **Be careful using power tools** or clearing large debris. Large items may shift suddenly
 - Get safety training before using a chainsaw, which regularly injures people during storm recovery
 - Falls are common. Consider hiring a professional company for large or difficult jobs. Don't take chances!

ELECTRICAL DANGERS: FIRE & CARBON MONOXIDE

- **Don't get burned.** If you are using a camp stove or fire to cook, pay attention and avoid distractions
- **Avoid carbon monoxide dangers** when the electrical power is off in your home
 - Only use charcoal or gas grills in an open, well-ventilated area and never inside the home. Keep the grill away from flammable materials, such as a deck railing or awning
 - Gasoline-powered generators should never be used in an enclosed area, such as a basement or garage. Make sure the area is well ventilated, dry, and covered
- **Do not connect a generator to your home's electrical system**
 - Connect appliances directly to the generator using properly-sized polarized extension cords. Do not overload the generator. Secure the extension cords to avoid trips and falls
 - Be sure the generator is properly grounded (follow the manufacturer's directions)
 - Before refueling, let the engine cool for at least two minutes to prevent a fire
 - Store extra fuel in a safe, dry area
- **Contact a professional electrician or electrical power company.** Following a flood, electrical wires and appliances will need to be thoroughly dried inside and out before they can be safely used again



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STAYING SAFE AROUND ANIMALS AND PETS

- **Use an insect repellent containing DEET** to reduce the risk of mosquito-borne illness
- **Survey the area** before beginning clean-up. Insects such as bees and wasps can become aggressive after a storm. Use pesticide if needed
- **Watch for snakes.** They may be found in unexpected places after a storm or flood
- **Use caution around pets.** Animals can be frightened after a storm. Be careful around domestic animals like dogs and cats, especially if you do not know them. Avoid contact with wild animals

FAMILY SAFETY: RETURNING HOME

- **Do not leave children unattended.** Do not allow them to play in or explore damaged or flooded areas. Keep hazardous materials out of reach, including cleaning/disinfecting chemicals, fuel for generators, and pest-control substances
- **Be careful when returning home**
 - Check for structural damage before entering a building. Do not enter if there is a danger of collapse
 - Turn off outside gas lines at the meter or tank. Let the house air for a few minutes
 - If the neighborhood electricity is off, it is still important to turn off the main breaker or fuse box. If you have to step in water to get to the breaker box, call a professional electrician for advice
 - Do not turn on lights, appliances, or gas systems until they've been tested
 - If you must enter at night, use a battery-operated flashlight, never an open flame

MORE INFORMATION

 preparedness.health.maryland.gov

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Information is from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Division of Public Health Occupational and Environmental Epidemiology Branch, <http://epi.publichealth.nc.gov/oe>.