

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

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

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