After a Hurricane or Flood: Cleanup of Flood Water

When returning to your home after a hurricane or flood, be aware that flood water may contain sewage. Protect yourself and your family by following these steps:

Inside the Home

- Keep children and pets out of the affected area until cleanup has been completed.
- Wear rubber boots, rubber gloves, and goggles during cleanup of affected area.
- Remove and discard items that cannot be washed and disinfected (such as, mattresses, carpeting, carpet padding, rugs, upholstered furniture, cosmetics, stuffed animals, baby toys, pillows, foam-rubber items, books, wall coverings, and most paper products).
- Remove and discard drywall and insulation that has been contaminated with sewage or flood waters.
- Thoroughly clean all hard surfaces (such as flooring, concrete, molding, wood and metal furniture, countertops, appliances, sinks, and other plumbing fixtures) with hot water and laundry or dish detergent.
- Help the drying process by using fans, air conditioning units, and dehumidifiers.
- After completing the cleanup, wash your hands with soap and warm water. Use water that has been boiled for 1 minute (allow the water to cool before washing your hands).
    - Or you may use water that has been disinfected for personal hygiene use (solution of ⅛ teaspoon [~0.75 milliliters] of household bleach per 1 gallon of water). Let it stand for 30 minutes. If the water is cloudy, use a solution of ¼ teaspoon (~1.5 milliliters) of household bleach per 1 gallon of water.
- Wash all clothes worn during the cleanup in hot water and detergent. These clothes should be washed separately from uncontaminated clothes and linens.
- Wash clothes contaminated with flood or sewage water in hot water and detergent. It is recommended that a laundromat be used for washing large quantities of clothes and linens until your onsite waste-water system has been professionally inspected and serviced.
- Seek immediate medical attention if you become injured or ill.

Outside the Home

- Keep children and pets out of the affected area until cleanup has been completed.
- Wear rubber boots, rubber gloves, and goggles during cleanup of affected area.
- Have your onsite waste-water system professionally inspected and serviced if you suspect damage.
- Wash all clothes worn during the cleanup in hot water and detergent. These clothes should be washed separately from uncontaminated clothes and linens.

- After completing the cleanup, wash your hands with soap and warm water. Use water that has been boiled for 1 minute (allow the water to cool before washing your hands).
    - Or you may use water that has been disinfected for personal hygiene use (solution of ⅛ teaspoon [~0.75 milliliters] of household bleach per 1 gallon of water). Let it stand for 30 minutes. If the water is cloudy, use solution of ¼ teaspoon (~1.5 milliliters) of household bleach per 1 gallon of water.
- Seek immediate medical attention if you become injured or ill.

The information in this fact sheet is general in nature and is not intended to be used as a substitute for professional advice. For more information, please contact your local, state, or tribal health department.