

## What to Do After a Flood or Flash Flood

### CORE ACTION MESSAGES

- Help yourself, then help others.
- Stay away from damaged areas.

- **Get medical care at the nearest hospital or clinic, if necessary.** Contaminated floodwater can cause infection. Severe injuries will require medical attention.
- **Help people who require special assistance**—infants, elderly people, those without transportation, large families who may need additional help in an emergency situation, people with disabilities, and the people who care for them.
- **Stay away from damaged areas.** Your presence might hamper rescue and other emergency operations, and put you at further risk from the residual effects of floods, such as contaminated water, crumbled roads, landslides, mudflows, and other hazards.
- **Continue to listen to NOAA Weather Radio or a local radio or television station and return home only when authorities indicate it is safe to do so.** Flood dangers do not end when the water begins to recede; there may be flood-related hazards within your community, which you could hear about from local broadcasts.
- **Stay out of any building if floodwater remains around the building.** Floodwater often undermines foundations, causing sinking. Floors can crack or break and buildings can collapse.
- **Avoid entering any building (home, business, or other) before local officials have said it is safe to do so.** Buildings may have hidden damage that makes them unsafe. Gas leaks or damage to electric lines or water lines can create additional problems.
- **Report broken utility lines to the appropriate authorities.** Reporting potential hazards will get the utilities turned off as quickly as possible, preventing further hazard and injury.
- **Avoid smoking inside buildings.** Smoking in confined areas can cause fires.
- **When entering buildings, use extreme caution.** Building damage may have occurred where you least expect it. Watch carefully every step you take.
- **Wear long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, and sturdy shoes.** The most common injury following a disaster is cut feet.
- **Use battery-powered lanterns or flashlights when examining buildings. DO NOT USE CANDLES.**
- **Examine walls, floors, doors, staircases, and windows to make sure that the building is not in danger of collapsing.**
- **Inspect foundations for cracks or other damage.** Cracks and damage to a foundation can render a building uninhabitable.
- **Look for fire hazards.** There may be broken or leaking gas lines, flooded electrical circuits, or submerged furnaces or electrical appliances. Flammable or explosive materials may have traveled from upstream. Fire is the most frequent hazard following floods.
- **Check for gas leaks.** If you smell gas or hear a blowing or hissing noise, open a window and get everyone outside quickly. Turn off the gas at the outside main valve if you can and call the gas company from a neighbor's home. If you turn off the gas for any reason, it must be turned back on by a professional.
- **Look for electrical system damage.** If you see sparks or broken or frayed wires, or if you smell burning insulation, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit