

- **Take pictures of the damage, both of the building and its contents, for insurance claims.**
- **Open windows and doors to ventilate and dry your home.**
- **Pump out flooded basements gradually (about one-third of the water per day) to avoid structural damage.** If the water is pumped out completely in a short period of time, pressure from water on the outside could cause basement walls to collapse.
- **Service damaged septic tanks, cesspools, pits, and leaching systems as soon as possible.** Damaged sewage systems are health hazards.
- **Use the telephone only for emergency calls.** Telephone lines are frequently overwhelmed in disaster situations. They need to be clear for emergency calls to get through.
- **Watch animals closely.** Keep all your animals under your direct control. Pets may become disoriented, particularly if the disaster has affected scent markers that normally allow them to find their home. Pets may be able to escape from your home or your fence may be broken. Be aware of hazards at nose and paw or hoof level, particularly debris, spilled chemicals, fertilizers, and other substances that might not seem to be dangerous to humans. In addition, the behavior of pets may change dramatically after a disaster, becoming aggressive or defensive, so be aware of their well-being and take measures to protect them from hazards, including displaced wild animals, and to ensure the safety of other people and animals.

For information on **portable-generator safety** and **carbon monoxide poisoning**, see Appendix: Portable Generators.