

Public Health Notice: *Keeping Safe After Hurricanes, Storms and Floods*

You can do lots of things to stay safe after a flood. The Philadelphia Department of Public Health offers these tips to help you and your family stay safe during a flood and when cleaning up after the flood.

Stay Out of the Water!

- **Do Not Drive or Walk into Floodwater!** It can be deeper than you expect and you could get stuck.
- **Floodwater Moves Quickly!** It can sweep even good swimmers downstream.
- **Floodwater is NOT Clean!** You can get cut or hurt by debris floating in the water. There also might be small amounts of chemicals or sewage that could make you sick.



Electricity Warning!

If there is electrical equipment in the water, it could be electrified, and you could get shocked.

Be sure to turn off the electricity in all flooded rooms in your home or business as soon as possible.

Stay Safe!

- **Wash Your Hands!** You can get sick if you eat, drink or smoke after touching the water or things that have been spoiled by the flood.
- **Protect Yourself!** Wear waterproof gloves, boots, and other protective clothing while cleaning. These clothes should be thrown away or washed after cleanup is completed each day.
- **Call your health care provider** if you get cut or hurt by something in the floodwater, ask about getting a tetanus shot.
- **Call your health care provider** if you or a family member has any of the following:
 - **Fever over 100 degrees**
 - **Vomiting**
 - **Diarrhea**
 - **Severe stomach cramps**

For more information about going back into your house safely after a flood, visit:

<http://emergency.CDC.gov/disasters/floods/>

Clean Up!

- **First turn off the electricity in all flooded rooms!**
- **Remove all water** by mopping, pumping, wet vacuuming or clearing drains.
- **Clean and dry thoroughly:**
 - All wet light fixtures (**Don't** turn the electricity back on until they are dry!)
- **Throw out:**
 - All ceiling tiles, paper products, baseboards, and insulation that were damaged by water
 - All drywall up to four feet above the floodwater line
 - Furniture that has absorbed water (like mattresses, sofas, and upholstered chairs)
 - Medicines and foods that touched floodwater
 - All perishable foods that have not been refrigerated for more than six hours
 - Any frozen foods that have thawed
- **Wet vacuum, shampoo and air-dry:**
 - Carpets
- **Wash with soap and water, wipe with a disinfectant, and dry:**
 - Furniture that doesn't absorb water (like wooden chairs and cabinets)
 - All contaminated floors, counters, and other surfaces
 - All cooking and eating utensils that were touched or splashed by floodwater
 - Foam rubber items
- **Wipe with a disinfectant or wash in a dishwasher in hot water:**
 - Children's toys (**Don't** let children play with toys until they have been cleaned and disinfected!)
- **Wipe twice with a disinfectant, then air-dry:**
 - Wood and metal studs
- **Open windows and doors while cleaning and for at least 24 hours after cleaning.**

This will help surfaces to dry more quickly, and will help prevent mold. If you can, use fans or dehumidifiers to help dry things.

Make Your Own Disinfectant!

Ingredients

- 1/4 (one-quarter) cup of bleach
- 1 gallon of water

Instructions

- Pour bleach into water
- Mix thoroughly
- Dip a rag into the disinfectant and wipe dirty items

It's West Nile Virus Season!

You can get West Nile Virus from mosquito bites. Mosquitoes breed in standing pools of water. Be sure to dump out all water left over from the flood to avoid mosquitoes and West Nile Virus.



Learn more at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/>

**For more information about cleaning up after a flood,
call the Health Department's Environmental Engineering Section
Monday - Friday (8 am - 4:30 pm) at 215-685-7342**



CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING

Preventing Carbon Monoxide Poisoning After an Emergency

Generators, grills, camp stoves, or other gasoline, propane, natural gas, or charcoal-burning devices should never be used inside a home, basement, garage, or camper—or even outside near an open window.

Every home should have at least one working carbon monoxide detector. The detector's batteries should be checked twice annually, at the same time smoke detector batteries are checked.

Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless gas that can cause sudden illness and death if inhaled.

When power outages occur during emergencies such as hurricanes or winter storms, the use of alternative sources of fuel or electricity for heating, cooling, or cooking can cause CO to build up in a home, garage, or camper and to poison the people and animals inside.

Every year, more than 500 people die in the U. S. from accidental CO poisoning.

CO is found in combustion fumes, such as those produced by small gasoline engines, stoves, generators, lanterns, and gas ranges, or by burning charcoal and wood. CO from these sources can build up in enclosed or partially enclosed spaces. People and animals in these spaces can be poisoned and can die from breathing CO.

How to Recognize CO Poisoning

Exposure to CO can cause loss of consciousness and death. The most common symptoms of CO poisoning are headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion. People who are sleeping or who have been drinking alcohol can die from CO poisoning before ever having symptoms.

Important CO Poisoning Prevention Tips

- Never use a gas range or oven to heat a home.
- Never use a charcoal grill, hibachi, lantern, or portable camping stove inside a home, tent, or camper.
- Never run a generator, pressure washer, or any gasoline-powered engine inside a basement, garage, or other enclosed structure, even if the doors or windows are open, unless the equipment is professionally installed and vented. Keep vents and flues free of debris, especially if winds are high. Flying debris can block ventilation lines.
- Never run a motor vehicle, generator, pressure washer, or any gasoline-powered engine outside an open window, door, or vent where exhaust can vent into an enclosed area.
- Never leave the motor running in a vehicle parked in an enclosed or partially enclosed space, such as a garage.
- If conditions are too hot or too cold, seek shelter with friends or at a community shelter.
- If CO poisoning is suspected, consult a health care professional right away.

Educational materials

- Flyers and door hangers <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/co-materials.asp>
- Public Service Announcements <http://www.cdc.gov/co/psa.htm>
- CO Poisoning Prevention Guidelines <http://www.cdc.gov/co/guidelines.htm>

For more information, visit www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/carbonmonoxide.asp, or call CDC at 800-CDC-INFO (English and Spanish) or 888-232-6348 (TTY).

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WHEN THE POWER GOES OUT, KEEP YOUR GENERATOR OUTSIDE

Portable back-up generators produce the poison gas carbon monoxide (CO). CO is an odorless, colorless gas that kills without warning. It claims the lives of hundreds of people every year and makes thousands more ill. Follow these steps to keep your family safe.

PORTABLE GENERATORS

- ✓ Never use a generator inside your home or garage, even if doors and windows are open.
- ✓ Only use generators outside, more than 20 feet away from your home, doors, and windows.

CO DETECTORS

- ✓ Install battery-operated or battery back-up CO detectors near every sleeping area in your home.
- ✓ Check CO detectors regularly to be sure they are functioning properly.

CARBON MONOXIDE (CO) POISONING



CAN'T BE
SEEN



CAN'T BE
SMELLED



CAN'T BE
HEARD



CAN BE
STOPPED



U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention