

Flood Clean-Up Safety



Nothing is more important than your safety, especially during severe weather. Here are the five most important things to remember when cleaning up during/after flooding:

1 Flood water is contaminated
Flood water is a mixture of hazardous substances and debris. Stay out of this water and do not drive through it, especially where the depth is unknown. Remember that once water has hit sandbags, mud and building materials, they are also contaminated.

3 Utility safety
Watch out for active utilities, including power lines and natural gas lines. Shut off any utilities possible in the flood zone. Get away from any compromised energy source, and call your energy company immediately to report the problem.

2 Protect your body
Your lungs, skin, back and feet are your body parts most in danger during cleanup. If you must perform cleanup duties for work, your employer is responsible for providing proper personal protective equipment and training.

- When working around dusty conditions, wear at least an N-95 NIOSH-approved face mask. When working around mold, wear a NIOSH-approved HEPA face mask (N-100).
- Keep your skin covered. Hazardous substance found in flood water can be absorbed into the body through the pores on your skin.
- Back injuries due to items being much heavier and soaked with water are common during cleanup. Do not lift heavy items alone.
- Sharp objects can puncture thin shoes and boots. Wear a sturdy, slip-resistant boot during cleanup.
- Always wear gloves and eye protection during cleanup. Do not wash your cleanup clothing with regular laundry.

4 Do not let children participate in cleanup.
Their immune systems are not fully developed and can be easily compromised by the bacteria and hazardous substances. Have them help in other ways away from the actual flooded areas.

5 Equipment safety
Do not operate equipment, especially chain saws, without training and proper protective equipment. Chain saws and heavy equipment can be very dangerous to use if you do not know the proper ways to use them. Many people have been injured or lost their lives during disaster operations due to improper use of equipment.

Learn more at cseany.org/osh/storm or download our Clean-Up Safety App today on iTunes or Google Play Store.

