

Flood Recovery: Health and Safety Guidance

Updated 12/29/2022. Resources in Spanish (CDC): [Inundaciones, Después de una inundación, Agua de la inundación después de un desastre o una emergencia](#). More in-language resources linked below.

Key Guidance:

- **Avoid wading in floodwater, which can be contaminated and contain dangerous debris. Power lines and electrical appliances in contact with floodwater can cause electrical shock.**
- Wear heavy work gloves, protective clothing, and boots during clean up. Use appropriate face coverings (such as an N-95 mask/respirator) if cleaning mold or other debris.
- Individuals with asthma, other lung conditions, and/or existing health conditions should not enter buildings with indoor water leaks or mold growth that can be seen or smelled. Children should not take part in flood cleanup work.
- For homes with flood insurance, take pictures of the damage in your home and any items that were destroyed for your insurance claim.
- Wait for an electrical inspector to turn power back on.
- Prioritize removing standing water from homes, then dry homes and dispose of items which cannot dry quickly to prevent mold.
 - Throw out items that [cannot be washed and cleaned with a bleach solution](#), such as: mattresses, pillows, carpeting, carpet padding, and stuffed toys. See [Things to Keep and Throw Away \(PDF\)](#).
- Floodwater can contain bacteria and other contaminants. All items that have come into contact with flood water should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected, or discarded. When in doubt, throw it out.
 - Wash all materials with soap and water before using (toys, utensils, plates, etc.).
 - Discard contaminated foods and unsealed drinks.

[Reentering Your Home After a Flood \(En Español\)](#)

- NEVER turn power on or off yourself or use an electric tool or appliance while standing in water.
- Have an electrician check the house's electrical system before turning the power on again.
- Homes that have been flooded for several days may have mold. Contact a professional mold abatement company to have mold removed.
- Floodwater can contaminate your drinking water. [Understand available guidance for using safe water](#). Check for any current [Drinking Water Alerts](#) before using tap water and contact Seattle Public Utilities (call (206) 386-1800) for the current status of your drinking water.
- Prevent carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. When using generators and other gasoline-powered machinery, set up the equipment outdoors and at least 20 feet from any doors, windows, or vents.
- [Protect Yourself and Others From Electrical Hazards After a Disaster](#).
- If flood or storm water has entered your home, dry it out as soon as possible to [prevent mold](#).

[Clean Up Safely After A Disaster \(En Español\)](#)

- Wear appropriate protective equipment to clean up debris and household waste ([infographic](#))
- Wear appropriate equipment when entering a home with mold ([infographic](#))
- Be aware of hazards, including: electrical hazards, carbon monoxide poisoning, damaged structures, and dangerous materials (toxins, chemicals) ([Floodwater Safety and Health Hazards](#))
- [Flooded Homes Cleanup Guidance](#) from Environmental Health Protection Agency
- Items to keep and throw away after a flood ([link](#); [PDF](#))

King County Resources:

- Current [Drinking Water Alerts \(King County\)](#)
- [King County flood-related contacts](#)
- [Check the flood risk for your address](#)
- [Sandbag distribution information](#)
- [Sign up for King County flood alerts](#)
- [How to clean a house after a flood](#)
- [Cleaning a basement after a flood](#)
- [Safe food and medicine after a flood](#)
- [Septic tank systems during power outages or floods](#)
- [How to prepare for flooding](#)

Printable Resources:

- Wear appropriate protective equipment ([infographic](#))
- What to wear when entering a home with mold ([infographic](#))
- What to do when you are issued a Boil Water Order ([PDF infographic](#), in-language versions [available here](#))
- What to Keep and Throw Away ([PDF infographic](#))
- Be Flood Ready ([PDF brochure](#), in-language versions [available here](#))
- Flood Fighting: How To Use Sandbags ([PDF](#))

Additional Resources:

- [Build a disaster supply kit](#) (in-language resources available)
- [Disinfection of private wells](#) (in-language resources available)
- [Find hidden water supplies in an emergency](#) (in-language resources available)
- [How to create an emergency toilet](#)