

Steps to take before returning to homes or schools

Children, and whenever possible teens, should not be involved in clean-up efforts but can return once areas are cleaned. Children should be the last group to return to areas impacted by flooding.

Physical Hazards

- Clear debris and physical hazards and wear protective footwear to prevent slips, trips and falls

Electrical

- Turn off or disconnect electrical service to water-damaged units to prevent electric shock from damaged wires
- Use a dry plastic- or rubber-insulated tool to reset breakers and use only one hand do not touch a circuit breaker or replace a fuse with wet hands or while standing on a wet surface
- Contact a licensed electrician to inspect before flipping a switch or plugging in appliances until an electrician tells you it is safe do not turn on damaged electrical appliances as electrical parts can pose an electric shock hazard or overheat and cause a fire
- Keep power cord connections dry
- Use portable ground-fault circuit-interrupter (GFCI) protective devices to help prevent electrocution and electrical shock injury
- Discard electrical devices that have been submerged, including: circuit breakers, fuses, Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCI), receptacles, plugs, switches
- Follow manufacturer's instructions when using a wet-dry vacuum cleaner or a pressure washer to avoid electric shock
- Never use portable generators indoors or outdoors near open doors, windows or vents because they emit carbon monoxide (CO), a poisonous gas that is colorless and odorless

Mold

- Remove and throw away all porous items that cannot be thoroughly cleaned and dried quickly within 24-48 hours, including:
 - carpeting and carpet padding
 - upholstery and wallpaper
 - drywall, floor and ceiling tiles, and insulation material
 - some clothing, leather, paper, wood, and food
- Wear personal protective equipment, including: an N-95 respirator (hardware stores usually sell them), goggles, gloves, long pants, long-sleeved shirt, and work boots/shoes
- Open doors and windows
- Use fans to dry out the building
- Store wet items outside the home until insurance claims can be filed
- Control entry of additional moisture by fixing leaks in roofs, walls, or plumbing
- *Prevent* mold growth, clean wet items and surfaces with detergent and water
- Remove mold from small areas with a solution of 1 cup of bleach in 1 gallon of water
 - Use a stiff brush on rough surface materials like concrete
 - Never mix bleach or products containing bleach with ammonia or products containing ammonia
 - Read the label on any product to see what it contains
 - Open windows and doors to provide fresh air
- If mold covers more than 10 square feet, consider hiring a professional to remove it, and consult the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) guide *Mold Remediation in Schools and Commercial Buildings*, which also applies to other building types, free from EPA Indoor Air Quality Information Clearinghouse at (800) 438-4381 or from http://www.epa.gov/mold/mold_remediation.html

Fuel Spills/Leaks

- Do not move any propane tanks (whether 20-lb. tanks from a gas grill or household propane tanks) due to danger of fire or explosion
- Call the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources for fuel spill or leak clean-up advice at 1-800-641-5005
- Do not touch the spilled fuel, but if you absolutely must clean before a professional contractor can come, wear protective clothing and gear: oil-resistant and non-absorptive clothing, non-permeable gloves, rubber boots, completely covered skin, goggles, and N-95 respirator
- Immediately wash skin that may have come in contact with hazardous chemicals

Sewage/Septic Leaks

- Thoroughly wash hands before preparing food, eating, or smoking
- Wash soiled clothes with hot water
- Have pipe connections inspected by a plumber prior to using toilets

Water

- Do not drink or use for bathing/washing if there is a smell of petroleum or fuel
- Call the VT Dept. of Health Lab at 800-660-9997 to order a "Kit A" for coliform bacteria for private water (\$14)
- Call your local District Office to get a free test Kit A for coliform bacteria
 - Barre 1-888-253-8786 or (802) 479-4200
 - Bennington 1-800-637-7347 or (802) 447-3531
 - Brattleboro 1-888-253-8805 or (802) 257-2880
 - Burlington 1-888-253-8803 or (802) 863-7323
 - Middlebury 1-888-253-8804 or (802) 388-4644
 - Morrisville 1-888-253-8798 or (802) 888-7447
 - Newport 1-800-952-2945 or (802) 334-6707
 - Rutland 1-888-253-8802 or (802) 786-5811
 - St. Albans 1-888-253-8801 or (802) 524-7970
 - St. Johnsbury 1-800-952-2936 or (802) 748-5151
 - Springfield 1-888-296-8151 or (802) 885-5778
 - White River Junction 1-888-253-8799 or (802) 295-8820
- Boil water for one minute until a water test confirms that the water is safe. Do this for:
 - drinking
 - cooking
 - making juice or ice
 - washing fruits and vegetables
 - brushing teeth
- Shower with caution when on a boil-water notice avoid getting water in eyes, mouth, and wounds. Do not allow children to swallow bath water if on a boil-water notice.

Soil and Flood Sediment

How to remove mud, dry dirt, and dust **from your home**:

- Assume that mud, dry dirt, and dust are possibly contaminated with sewage, farm waste, petroleum, or industrial chemicals

Inside

- Spray dry dirt or dust with soapy water to prevent particles from getting in the air
- Wear an N-95 respirator mask (most hardware stores sell them), gloves, goggles, pants, long-sleeved shirt, and work boots/shoes
- Small amounts can be disposed of as solid waste in the trash
- Do not dump flood sediment in rivers, streams, or other bodies of water

For more information dial 2-1-1 • Website: Healthvermont.gov

- <http://www.facebook.com/HealthVermont> • <http://twitter.com/#!/healthvermont>

Outside

- If you are disturbing dry dirt or dust **outside** your home, prevent particles from entering the air by spraying with water (soapy water if possible), and wear an N-95 respirator mask and other protective clothing

Food

- Discard any food that has come into contact with floodwater
- For fruit and vegetables that did not come into contact with floodwater, wash with only water that is safe to drink before eating
- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible. If the doors remain closed, a refrigerator will keep food cold for about 4 hours, a freezer will keep the temperature for about 48 hours, while a half full freezer will keep the temperature for about 24 hours
- Do not attempt to cook and eat meat, poultry, fish or eggs that have been above 40°F for 2 hours or more. Discard these products as they can be contaminated with bacteria and can lead to foodborne illness

Personal Protective Equipment to Wear when Cleaning or Removing Building Material

- An N-95 respirator mask (hardware stores usually sell them)
- Goggles
- Gloves
- Long pants, long-sleeved shirt
- Steel-toed boots or work shoes

More Building Safety Resources

<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/publications/books/inspectionmanual>