

# Returning to Your Home After a Flood

Floodwaters in and around your home can cause injuries and health problems. **Do not return to your home until officials from your city or town say it is safe and the water has gone down.**

## Look around outside your home.

- Stay away from downed power lines, gas leaks or damaged fuel tanks.
- Do not enter your home if you see damage to the structure such as new cracks, roof problems or walls that have shifted.
- If you smell natural gas (like rotten eggs) or hear hissing leave the area immediately and call your local utility.

## Turn off the power.

- If there is standing water in your home and you can turn off the main power from a dry location, then go ahead and turn off the power.
- call an electrician to turn it off. **NEVER turn power on or off yourself or use an electric tool or appliance while standing in water.**
- Never use a generator or any gasoline-powered engine inside your home, basement, or garage or less than 20 feet from any window, door, or vent.

## Make sure water & food are safe.

- Follow notices from your town or city on whether your water is safe to drink.
- If you get water from a well or spring, do not use the water until you have it tested. Use bottled water or boil water for at least one minute to use for drinking and cooking. If your water smells sweet or like fuel or chemicals, **do not drink it.**
- Throw away food that may have come in contact with flood or storm water and foods that have not been refrigerated properly.

## Clean & prevent mold.

- Wear protective clothing such as pants and long sleeves, waterproof work boots, rubber gloves, goggles, and an N95 respirator.
- Children, people with breathing problems and people with weakened immune systems should not help clean up after a flood.
- Open all doors and windows including interior and attic access to allow air flow.
- If your home has been flooded and has been closed up for several days, assume your home has mold. To dry your home, use dehumidifiers and

fans, placed at a window or door to blow the air out rather than into your home to avoid spreading the mold.

- Have your home heating, ventilating, and air-conditioning (HVAC) system checked and cleaned by a professional who is experienced in mold cleanup **before you turn it on** to prevent spreading mold throughout the house.
- Clean moldy items that do not absorb water (like glass, plastic, marble, granite, ceramic tile, metal) with soap and water. Use a disinfectant if needed.
- Wash clothes and other fabrics. You may need to throw away materials that easily absorb water (like cushions, mattresses, drywall, carpet, insulation and ceiling tiles).