



AFTER THE FLOODING: NOW WHAT?

TIPS FOR RETURNING HOME

from the American Red Cross

Take with you: flashlight, first aid kit, hard-soled shoes, dust mask, water, a stick for turning items over, trash bags.

Look out for animals inside and out, especially snakes.

Listen to your doors- If it sticks only at the bottom, it can likely be forced open. If it sticks at the top, your ceiling may be holding water. You can force the door open but wait outside the doorway for a minute where you will be protected if something falls. If the ceiling is sagging: Stand away from, not under, the sag (under a doorway is safest). Poke a hole in the ceiling at the edge of the sag so any trapped water can begin to drain. Work your way inward.

Look down- the ground and floors are likely covered with debris including broken bottles and nails. Floors and stairs that have been covered with mud can be very slippery.

Be alert- for gas leaks. Use a flashlight to inspect for damage. Don't smoke or use candles, lanterns, or open flames unless you are sure gas is off and the area has been aired out.

Turn off the electricity at the main breaker or fuse box (even if the power is out in your community (then you can decide when your home is dry enough to turn it back on.))

Throw out spoiled food and flooded cosmetics and medicines and makeup

Think before you drink: Confirm that the water is clean and safe. Don't drink it or wash dishes until you're sure.

Rescue your valuables -money, jewelry, insurance papers, photos, family heirlooms. Wash the mud off before the items can dry and put them in a safe place - items like photos and books that are easily damaged when wet can be frozen and cleaned later when you have more time.

Hose off the mud left behind by flood-waters – it contains most of the health hazards you will face. It is very important to get rid of the mud as soon as possible, and is a lot easier i before the mud dries out.

Stay out - Use a generator or other gasoline-powered machine outdoors only. The same goes for camping stoves. Fumes from charcoal are especially deadly-cook with charcoal only outdoors.

Start listing the damage Take pictures or videos as you clean up so you will have records for insurance claims, applications for disaster assistance, and income tax deductions.