

open the refrigerator unless absolutely necessary. You may add ice to the refrigerator if you know it will be turned on soon.

7. Throw out anything with an unusual color, odor, or if a perishable food is above 45° F internally.
8. Place discarded food in a tightly closed container until pick up or disposal.

#### **Clothing and Bedding**

Clothing, carpets, furniture, toys and/or bedding should be discarded unless they are cleaned and disinfected. Movable objects could be put outdoors to be cleaned and dried in the sunlight. Discarded clothing should be placed in a tightly closed container until pick-up or disposal.

After clean up, make sure that all clothing and parts of the body that came in contact with the flood waters and sewage are thoroughly washed. Be sure to wash hands immediately afterwards.

Persons engaged in cleaning operations should be particularly mindful of their personal hygiene. Contaminated fingers should be kept away from eyes, nose and mouth. Persons are advised against smoking at this time because soiled fingers carry disease germs to the cigarette and then to the mouth. After clean-up, hands should be thoroughly cleaned using a nail brush and a lot of soap.

#### **Note:**

This information base was compiled from various state and local health agencies. Although this outline may be sufficient for your community's needs, contact your local health agency for further suggestions.

# **CLEANING UP THE MESS**

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*... After the Flood or Sewage Back-up*

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Sewer Back-up

If flood waters or sewage fill your basement, you **must** clean properly to prevent you and your family from becoming sick or injured. **Do not bring children into the flooded area during clean-up!** The following are suggestions on how to clean up a flood or sewage problem.

### Cleaning and Sanitizing

1. Drain all flood waters and/or sewage by natural draining or pumping.
2. Remove dirt, soil and debris from surfaces that came in contact with flood waters.
3. Wash down all walls, floors and surfaces that the flood water or sewage touched with clean, warm or hot water and a low suds detergent.
4. Rinse again with warm or hot water.
5. Sanitize by rinsing walls, floors and surfaces using one of the following mixtures:
  - 2-1/2 tablespoons (tbs) of Lysol/Pine-Sol per gallon of water used, **or**
  - 8 tablespoons (tbs) of laundry bleach (i.e., Clorox, Roman Cleanser) in each gallon of water used.
6. Air the area by opening windows or using fans.
7. Prevent tracking flood debris and sewage into clean areas.

### Safe Water Supply

Water from wells that have been flooded should be considered unsafe and should not be used for drinking, cooking, brushing teeth, dishwashing or clothes washing. Well water should not be used until it is confirmed safe. Pick up sample bottles for testing water from the local health department.

If you **must** use some of the well water, do the following:

1. Boil it for 10 minutes, **or**
2. Add 3-4 drops of bleach to each gallon of water. Mix and let the water stand for 30 minutes before use. The water will be safe, however, a chlorine taste may be noticed.
3. A better option would be to use municipal (i.e., city, township) water or water from a well outside the contaminated area until your well is safe. If you must return to your home, take a **safe** water supply with you.

### Utilities

The following guidelines should be followed when entering a flooded area with gas and/or electricity present:

1. Have the utility companies shut off the gas and electricity.
2. **Do Not** touch the fuse box or any plugged-in cords or appliances until the electricity is shut off. Touching these could result in electrocution.
3. If an electrical appliance motor or its controls are submerged under water, **do not** start it until consulting with the dealer or service company.

4. Do not relight appliances until checked by the gas company. Make sure all pilot lights are on before relighting burners.
5. **Do not** light matches until the gas is turned off. If there is a gas leak, it could cause an explosion.

### Foods

Foods that are contaminated can make you and your family sick. They should be dealt with in the following manner:

1. Destroy and discard **all** contaminated bottled and boxed foods.
2. Canned goods (including home canned jars) may be kept if cleaned thoroughly. To clean containers:
  - Scrub with soap and water. (Use a brush around the rim of home canned jars.)
  - Submerge in chlorinated water for 15 minutes (1 ounce of bleach per gallon of water).
  - Air dry to prevent rusting.
3. Food stored in a freezer will keep for 2 days after losing power, if the freezer is full (1 day for a half-full freezer) and not opened.
4. If your freezer cannot be started in a day or two, store food in someone else's freezer.
5. Meat that has ice crystals may safely be re-frozen. If it is only "cool-feeling" it is best to cook it, and then re-freeze it.
6. Food stored in a refrigerator will keep for 4-6 hours after losing power, depending on how warm it is in the kitchen. **Do not**