

Safety First



Flooding Puts Health at Risk

As the temperature rises and the winter's snowfall starts to melt, water levels will begin to rise this spring. That means there is an increased risk of flooding, which can be a serious risk to the health and safety of your family.

While there really is not anything you can do to prevent a flood from coming, there are some things you can do to prevent damage to your home and your wallet:

- Move appliances like washers, dryers, water heaters and heating systems to platforms that will keep them at least one foot above the high water mark. Use pressure-treated wood for the platforms, but remember to build stairs onto the platforms that you will need frequent access to, like the washer and dryer.
- Prevent sewage from flowing back into your home by installing a septic backflow valve and a floating floor drain plug at the lowest point in your basement.
- Also try to have your electric box and outlets relocated above the high water mark.
- If you know a flood is coming, turn off your electricity, natural gas and water. After floodwaters have receded, you may need to call a professional to have them turned back on.
- Look into flood insurance for your home. Most homeowner's insurance does not cover flood damage and a separate policy under the National Flood Insurance Program is necessary to protect you from cleanup and replacement expenses.
- Keep important family documents like birth certificates, social security cards and banking information in a waterproof container so you can grab it all when you are in a hurry to leave.
- Develop a checklist of what needs to be done before a flood reaches your home when a warning has been issued. Items may include evacuation procedures, supplies and preventative measures to do beforehand.

After floodwaters have receded, you're probably going to have a lot of cleaning up to do. Here are some tips to keep you and your family safe in the process:

- First and foremost, take care of yourself and your family. Administer first aid, rest and eat well and seek medical attention if necessary.
- Watch where you walk because dangerous debris will be everywhere.
- Do not use electrical appliances that have gotten wet until an electrician has checked them.

SDREA Loss Control

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- Watch for damages to the structural stability of your home.
- Try to clean items when they are still wet and clean what is most important to you first. It will be easier to clean mud off your belongings when they are wet as opposed to waiting until everything is dry.
- Boil all drinking water before using and do not eat anything that has come in contact with floodwaters.
- Use a flashlight, not torches or lanterns because dangerous gases may be leaking. Also, never use gas-powered pumps or generators indoors because they emit the odorless, colorless and deadly gas carbon monoxide.
- Be careful about trying to walk or drive through water where you are unsure about the depth or speed of the current.
- Broken utility lines should be reported to the proper authorities and make sure you contact professionals to restore utilities in your own home.