

NJ Office of Emergency Management



Colonel Rick Fuentes
Superintendent, New Jersey State Police
State Director of Emergency Management

Major Dennis McNulty
Commanding Officer, Emergency Management

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

State: Mary Goepfert (609) 963-6818
FEMA: Don Caetano (347) 416-3792

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

March 16, 2011

FEMA, NJOEM Offer Advice for Homeowners in Flood Areas

WEST TRENTON, N.J. – After flooding occurs, it is most important to take care of yourself and your family. A flood can cause emotional and physical stress. Make sure you rest often, eat well and do cleanup jobs one at a time. Recommendations for keeping your home safe after a flood:

- Turn off the electricity at the main breaker or fuse box even if the power is off in your community.
- Keep a battery-powered radio so you can listen for emergency updates and news reports that may be provided by the state or federal government or other organizations.
- Important papers with minimal damage can be air dried but when records are very wet, avoid harsh sunlight or high heat. Put them in clean, dry boxes lined with thin plastic to keep the boxes dry. Papers that cannot be dried immediately should be frozen for air drying later.
- Avoid travel, for your own safety and to allow emergency workers to do their jobs. Listen to the radio for news of road closures and places to avoid and use the phone only for emergencies. If your car stalls in rapidly rising waters, get out immediately and climb to higher ground.
- If you must walk, stay on firm ground. Moving water only 6 inches deep can sweep you off your feet. Standing water may be electrically charged. Watch for fallen objects, downed electrical wires, and weakened walls, bridges, roads, and sidewalks. Use a stick to poke through debris that may hide animals or snakes.

If you are evacuated, don't return to your flood-damaged home before the area is declared safe by local officials. When returning following these recommendations will help avoid further emergencies:

- First walk around the outside checking for loose power lines, gas leaks, and structural damage.
- Upon entering, if you smell gas or hear a hissing or blowing sound, open a window and leave immediately. Turn off the main valve if possible and call the gas company from another location.
- Do not turn on the lights until you are sure they're safe to use. Use a flash light to inspect the home, turning it on before entering to avoid a potential spark that could ignite leaking gas.
- Until you are sure of your safety do not stand in water or touch your electrical system.

- Be aware of loose boards and slippery floors.
- If appliances are wet, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker, then unplug them.
- Throw out all food and other supplies that may have become contaminated.
- Do not flush toilets until you know that sewage lines are intact. Disinfect items that may have been contaminated by raw sewage, bacteria, or chemicals.
- If your basement has flooded, pump it out gradually (about one third of the water per day) to avoid collapsing walls.

Remember to take pictures of damages. Keep good records of repair and cleaning costs and call your insurance agent. If you hire cleanup or repair contractors, be sure to check references.

Play it safe. Additional flooding or flash floods can occur. Listen for local warnings and information. Log on to FEMA's website: <http://www.fema.gov/hazard/flood/coping.shtm> or the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management website at: <http://www.readynj.gov> for more complete information.

###

To stay informed about disasters and emergencies in New Jersey via social media, follow the NJOEM on [Twitter @ReadyNJ](#), "like" us on www.facebook.com/READYNEWJERSEY, or get email and text message alerts via www.Nixle.com or www.njalert.gov.