

CLEANING AND DISINFECTION OF FLOODED PREMISES

The following procedure is recommended for the satisfactory cleaning and disinfecting of all premises, which have been flooded.

1. After the water has been removed from the premises, all mud and debris should be removed by scraping and washing the area.
2. This material should be placed at least 50 feet down grade from any well.
3. The premises and furniture should then be thoroughly washed and disinfected.

DISINFECTANTS

For walls, floors and cellars, disinfect by thoroughly washing and brushing with a sodium hypochlorite solution. This solution can be prepared by adding 1 tablespoon of household bleach to an 8-quart pail of water (the directions on the package should be followed when using other chlorine compounds).

FOODS

Since foods exposed to flood waters may constitute a health hazard, the following notes are intended as a guide to disposing of contaminated foods. When in doubt throw it out!

CANNED FOODS

Canned goods should be closely checked for "leakers" and "swells". Particular attention should be paid to seams and joints for signs of corrosion. Home-preserved fruits in jars and sealers which show evidence of contamination around the tops should be discarded. Although many of these jars may be safe, there is a danger, which may not be easy to see.

SOFT FOODS

Soft foods, including all kinds of meats and dairy products, should be discarded if there is evidence of contact with flood water.

WRAPPED FOODS

Foods which have been wrapped in moisture-proof wrappers should be examined for breaks in the wrapper. Intact wrappers should be removed and the product re-wrapped. Where there is evidence of moisture, the product should be regarded as unsafe.

Food-handling equipment should be thoroughly scoured and washed and then treated with an effective disinfecting solution. Chlorine not less than 100 parts per million and preferably up to 400 parts per million (1 to 4 tablespoons of household bleach per gallon of water) is satisfactory, or immersion in boiling water for at least one minute. In all cases a generous safety margin should be allowed.



SEPTIC TANKS

Septic tanks in areas which have been flooded should not be operated again until the disposal field has dried and in certain instances until the tank itself has been checked.

If early drying does not re-establish drainage through the septic tanks, obtain the assistance of the authorities having jurisdiction.

GENERAL CLEAN-UP

Following the clean-up of buildings, attention must be turned to the removal of flood-borne material from yards. All materials to be discarded should be done through municipal garbage removal where possible or by a commercial waste removal service. Particular effort should be made to remove all filth that might, in warm weather serve as a breeding place for flies or other vectors.

DRUGS, MEDICINES AND ANIMAL FOOD

Drugs and medicines that have been in contact with flood water should be destroyed. No attempt should be made to replace loosened labels as this is dangerous. All unlabeled drugs should be destroyed. Do not leave them where they may be found by children.

If in doubt about animal foods, contact the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA).

ELECTRICAL HAZARDS

No attempt should be made to try out or to operate any electrical appliances until the wiring in your home or building has been inspected and found safe.

HEATING HAZARDS

Three main hazards exist from domestic or other heating systems following flood damage. These hazards are: explosion, suffocation and fire. Therefore, take every precaution to see that the heating system is safe before resuming its use.

precautions:

- Contact the local authorities to find out if your home is located in a flash-flood-prone area.
- Learn about your community's emergency plans, warning signals, evacuation routes and emergency shelter locations.
- Plan and practice a flood evacuation route with your family. Ask a relative or friend to be the family contact in case your family is separated during a flood. Make sure everyone in your family knows the name, address and phone number of this contact person.
- Post emergency phone numbers at every phone.
- Inform local authorities about any special needs, i.e., elderly or bedridden people, or anyone with a disability.
- Identify potential home hazards and know how to secure or protect them before a flood strikes. Be prepared to turn off electrical power, gas and water supplies before you evacuate. Turn off electrical power in the case of standing water or fallen electrical wires.
- Buy and install sump pumps with back-up power.
- Have a licensed electrician raise electric components (switches, sockets, circuit breakers and wiring) at least 12" above your home's projected flood elevation.
- For drains, toilets and other sewer connections, install backflow valves or plugs to prevent floodwaters from entering.
- Anchor fuel tanks that can contaminate your basement if torn free.

(Centres for Disease Control and Prevention- Key Facts About Flood Readiness -2007)



FLOOD FORECASTING

The Ministry of Natural Resources provides a Flood Forecasting service through the Surface Water Monitoring Centre. Flooding along Ontario's rivers, lakes and streams can occur at any time of the year. Sometimes flooding is just a nuisance. On other occasions, flooding can cause devastating losses to roads, bridges, homes, property and communities including death for some victims. Every river has the potential to flood given the right conditions.

No two flood plains are the same. Some may appear to flood frequently and some not at all. Flooding can be caused by a number of things including heavy rain, excess snowmelt, and the break up and jamming of ice in rivers or along lake shores. High winds that create water level surges can cause flooding on lakes and even some large rivers. After heavy rainfall and/or snowmelt, some rivers may take days or weeks for water levels to rise to flood stages, while others may flood in a matter of hours. However, flood plains do have one thing in common. If they are occupied, there is a risk of flood damage and loss of life. Flood warnings reduce this risk.



An equilateral triangle within a circle is the international symbol for emergency preparedness. The blue triangle represents harmony, balance and calm while the orange circle is the sign of alert and danger. EP and MLHU indicates the commitment of the Middlesex-London Health Unit to Emergency Preparedness.

**For more information on
Emergency Preparedness visit:
www.healthunit.com/emergency**

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Flooding is considered the most significant natural hazard in Ontario in terms of damage, civil disruption and death.