



STATE OF OHIO

Emergency Operations Center

NEWS RELEASE

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State Officials Remind Ohioans to Use Caution in Floodwaters

Pumping out basements too quickly is dangerous

As Ohioans begin the process of returning to their homes, following the recent flooding, officials with the state of Ohio are urging caution, when pumping water out of flooded basements.

Once floodwaters recede, groundwater outside the home may be pushing hard against the exterior walls, while water in the basement is pushing back. Draining water from the basement too fast could cause the collapse of the walls, floors and foundation of the house. Water must be drained slowly to equalize the pressure on both sides of the wall.

“We know people are eager to begin the process of removing flood waters from their homes, however it is important that homeowners exercise caution,” said Henry Guzmán, director of the Ohio Department of Public Safety. “By following the proper procedures, residents can protect themselves, their families and their property.”

Ohio Emergency Management Agency officials recommend the following procedures be followed when pumping a basement to avoid serious damage, collapse or injury:

- Begin pumping when floodwaters are no longer covering the ground outside;
- Pump the water out one foot at a time, mark the water level and wait overnight;
- Check the water level the next day, if the level went back up (covered your mark) it is still too early to drain the basement;
- Wait 24 hours, and then pump the water down 1 foot again, checking the level the next day;
- When the water in the basement stops returning to your mark, pump out 2 or 3 feet and wait overnight; and
- Repeat daily until all the water is out of the basement.

Safety precautions should also be taken to avoid injury:

- Never enter a flooded basement unless you are absolutely sure the electricity has been turned off;
- Do not use gasoline-powered pumps or generators indoors or in a confined space; and
- Be cautious around floodwater contaminated by sewage.

For more information, log onto www.ema.ohio.gov or www.weathersafety.ohio.gov.

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