

Officials Urge Flood Water Safety for Northern Ohio Residents

(Columbus, OH) – Nationally, floods are among the most frequent and costly natural disaster in terms of loss of life and economic hardship, a fact known all too well in the state of Ohio. As local emergency management officials respond to flooding in Northern Ohio, the Ohio Department of Public Safety's State Emergency Management Agency (Ohio EMA) continues to monitor and respond to requests from local counties for communication capabilities and sandbags.

Ohio EMA is also reminding residents affected by the rising water along the Blanchard River of flooding related health and safety concerns:

- Avoid areas already flooded, especially if the water is flowing fast. Do not attempt to cross flowing streams. Road beds may be washed out under flood waters. NEVER drive through flooded roadways. ***Turn Around Don't Drown™***
- Don't allow your children to play or swim in flood waters.

Cleanup

- Mold is a likely problem in flooded homes. Mold has the potential to affect the health of all family members. It is important to remove all water and fix any leaks before cleaning. Clean hard surfaces with a solution of bleach and water; make sure to ventilate the area when using chlorine bleach. Wear a filter mask and gloves to avoid contact with the mold. Let the bleach and water sit for 15 minutes and then dry the area thoroughly. Wet, porous materials, such as carpeting, wallboard, insulation, wallpaper and furniture should be discarded because they remain a source of mold growth.
- Use fans and dehumidifiers to air and dry out the home. If the weather permits, open doors and windows.
- Check with your local permit authority before doing any flood-related demolition.

Food Safety

- Food that comes in contact with flood water can also pose a serious health risk. The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) recommends throwing away any product if there is any doubt about its safety.
- ODH also recommends throwing away home-canned goods if the tops have been exposed to flooding. Food in paper containers, cloth or cardboard packaging that has been exposed to flood water should also be discarded, along with soft drinks and condiments using capped containers.
- Store-bought canned goods may be saved if they are disinfected prior to opening. Label the can with a waterproof marker, remove the paper label and wash the can thoroughly in hot, soapy water. Rinse well; after washing and rinsing, disinfect the can by soaking it for five minutes in a

chlorine solution using one tablespoon of bleach (labeled 5.25 percent sodium hypochlorite) for each gallon of cool water.

Water Safety

- Flood water may contain various bacteria, viruses and other infectious organisms that may cause disease. Flood water may also contain fecal material from overflowing sewage systems.
- If you have a private well, run cold water for about 30 minutes to allow the well to recharge naturally. Do not save the water. Have the well disinfected and tested before drinking or using for cooking. If you must use tap water, boil it vigorously for at least one minute. If you cannot boil it, add 16 drops of bleach to each gallon of water. Mix thoroughly and allow to stand for 30 minutes. This method should be used only with water that is clean in appearance and free of odors.
- Don't let children drink or put toys in flood waters. If your child shows any signs or symptoms of illness after being in flood waters such as nausea, vomiting or diarrhea, contact your physician as soon as possible. If you cannot make it to your physician, go to the nearest hospital emergency room.

For additional information on flood safety and other preparedness tips, log onto www.ema.ohio.gov

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