

Preparing for a Flood

Flooding can create many health risks, safety and environmental problems. Take precautions ahead of time to minimize these hazards. The best way to minimize health risks due to flood damage is to plan ahead. Remember that floodwaters are contaminated. Proper handling of items that contact floodwater can help avoid illness.

Have an Emergency Plan

- www.ready.gov/business
- Review and update your emergency plan, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses for family, friends, medical, veterinary, and other services you may need.
- You may also want to inquire about emergency plans at places where your family spends time like work, daycare and school.

Consider Flood Insurance

- Review your insurance policy. Average insurance policies do not cover flood damage.
- It generally takes 30 days for a flood insurance policy to take effect.

Put Together an Emergency Kit

- www.ready.gov/business
- Check and resupply your emergency kits regularly.

Protect Your Home or Business

Survey your home or business for potential problems that may result if your home or business is flooded. Action taken ahead of time can minimize flood damage and may prevent or reduce exposure to health risks.

Prepare Your Fuel Oil Tank

If your basement is flooded, the water may get deep enough to cause your fuel oil tank to tip over or float to the surface. If the tank's fill or vent pipes are not watertight, floodwater may enter and force fuel oil out of the tank.

If forecasts indicate potential flooding of your basement, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency recommends:

- Contact a bulk fuel distributor to remove the fuel from the tank before flooding begins and plug its vent and fill pipes.
- If emptying a tank is not possible or practical, secure it to concrete anchors in the ground so they cannot float away.
- If the tank is no longer in service, remove the unused equipment, including all piping, and seal the vent and fill openings.

Tank owners with questions may call the MPCA's offices in Detroit Lakes, Marshall, Willmar, St. Paul, Rochester, Brainerd or Duluth at 800-657-3864.

Relocate or Properly Dispose of Household Hazardous Materials

Move household hazardous materials to areas that are likely to remain dry during the flood. Some of these items include:

- Motor oil;
- Gasoline;
- Anti-freeze;
- Cleaning chemicals;
- Drain cleaner;
- Toilet bowl cleaner;
- Pesticides;
- Fertilizers;
- Paint; and
- Solvents.



Environmental Health Division
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Protect Your Well

MDH recommends the following steps if well owners think their well may flood:

- Store a supply of clean water before taking the well out of service.
- Disconnect the power supply for the well. For help, call a licensed well contractor or pump installer.
- If time allows, have a well contractor install a watertight seal, replacing the regular vented well cap or seal.
- If you don't have time to have a professional install a water tight seal, clean off the outside of the well casing and cover the top of the well with a heavy-duty trash bag or some other form of heavy plastic sheeting. Secure the plastic covering with electrical tape or other waterproof tape or strapping material. Do not use duct tape.

Detailed instructions for disinfecting and testing private wells are available from well specialists in MDH district offices in Bemidji, Duluth, Fergus Falls, Marshall, Rochester, St. Cloud and the metro area and on the MDH Web site: www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/wells.

MDH District Offices

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|--------------|--------------|
| Bemidji | 218-308-2100 |
| Duluth | 218-723-4642 |
| Fergus Falls | 218-332-5150 |
| Mankato | 507-344-2700 |
| Marshall | 507-537-7151 |
| Metro | 651-201-4500 |
| Rochester | 507-206-2700 |
| St. Cloud | 320-223-7300 |

MDH Environmental Health Flood Information

www.health.state.mn.us/floods

MDH Environmental Health Contacts

www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/contactus.htm

Asbestos

Asbestos and Lead Compliance:

651-201-4620

www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/asbestos

Carbon Monoxide and Mold

MDH Indoor Air Quality:

651-201-4601 or 800-798-9050

E-mail: health.indoorair@state.mn.us

www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/air

Cleaning Up and Food Safety

MDH Food, Beverage and Lodging:

651-201-4500

E-mail: health.foodlodging@state.mn.us

www.health.state.mn.us/foodsafety

Public Drinking Water

MDH Drinking Water Protection:

651-201-4700

E-mail: health.drinkingwater@state.mn.us

www.health.state.mn.us/water

Wells and Well Water

MDH Well Management:

651-201-4600 or 800-383-9808

E-mail: health.wells@state.mn.us

www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/wells

If you require this document in another format such as large print, Braille, or cassette tape, contact 651-201-5000 or 800-657-3908. For deaf or hard of hearing TTY: 651-201-5797