



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



After the Flood — Take Care to Avoid Injuries and Health Problems during Cleanup

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BURLINGTON – The Vermont Department of Health is reminding residents and volunteers to take all precautions to avoid injuries and illness during cleanup work after the flooding.

“We want everyone to stay safe and healthy after the flood,” said Health Commissioner Harry Chen, MD. “Experience from other states tells us that the number one health risk comes from injuries during cleanup. And although children want to help, give them tasks that keep them out of harm’s way.”

Residents, cleanup workers and volunteers do not need to have a tetanus booster (Tdap) shot to work in the flooded zone. Take precautions to avoid injury and exposure to flood water if you have an open wound. Seek immediate medical attention for wound care and a tetanus booster shot, if needed.

Health Department district office staff are distributing latex-free gloves and N95 masks with instructions for use, along with safe cleanup guidance and drinking water test kits to the towns hardest hit by the flooding. N95 masks are also available at most hardware stores.

The Health Department’s website has extensive information and resources to help. Go to www.healthvermont.gov, then click on ‘After the Flood’, including “[Creating a Healthy Home – A Field Guide for Clean-up of Flooded Homes](#)” and information about cleaning up mold.

Basic precautions to take during cleanup:

- Keep children and pets out of the affected area until cleanup is done.
- Wear sturdy footwear, long-sleeved shirts and pants. The Health Department also recommends wearing goggles and an N95 respirator (mask) when cleaning up dust, sand, silt, dirt and mold that can get into the air.
- Be careful when using power tools. Take care to avoid slips, trips and falls.
- To prevent carbon monoxide poisoning, never use gas-powered tools, generators or heaters inside or within a confined area.
- Wash hands often and well, especially before handling food, smoking, or any other hand-to-mouth behavior.
- Be careful to not overexert. Take rests, drink plenty of liquids, protect yourself against sun.

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