



A Union of Professionals

WORK SHOULDN'T HURT

Disaster Recovery Steps

Make sure it is safe to be in your home!

Check for structural damage. You need to find out whether there is any structural damage to your home. (You will probably need help from licensed professionals in making this decision.)

Plan your recovery. Assess your damage and develop a recovery plan before cleaning up and re-pairing everything. A recovery plan is simply a list of jobs that need to be done. Planning can help you save time and money.

Start documenting the damage. List the damage and take pictures or videotapes as you clean up so you will have a complete and thorough record. Good records are needed for insurance claims, applications for disaster assistance and income tax deductions.

Keep records and/or documentation of the following in one safe place (such as an envelope in your car):

- Damage to the building;
- Damage to the building's contents;
- Receipts for cleanup and restoration;
- Restoration expenses, such as material, labor and equipment rental; and
- Receipts for flood-related expenses, such as motel bills.

Decide if you need financial assistance.

- Check with your mortgage holder for available options.
- Call your insurance agent about the damage to your home and contents so your agent can file a claim.
- Think before you use credit cards

Keep lines of communication open with your family. Some of the biggest problems that arise after a disaster come from the mental strain of the loss and from worries about the future. Work together and let everyone know what you will be doing in the days ahead.

Important Contact Information: 1-800-621-FEMA (3362)

The **American Federation of Teachers** is a union of 1.7 million professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.

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Flood Safety Tips

Do not walk through flowing water. Six inches of moving water can knock you off your feet. Use a pole or stick to make sure the ground is still there before you go through an area where the water is not flowing.

Do not drive through a flooded area. Don't drive around road barriers; the road or bridge may be washed out.

Stay away from power lines and electrical wires. Electrical current can travel through water. Report downed power lines to your utility company or local emergency manager.

Turn off your electricity when you return home. Some appliances, such as televisions, can shock you even after they have been unplugged. Don't use appliances or motors that have gotten wet unless they have been taken apart, cleaned and dried.

Watch for animals, especially snakes. Small animals that have been flooded out of their homes may shelter in yours. Use a pole or stick to poke and turn items over and scare away small animals.

Look before you step. After a flood, the ground and floors are covered with debris, including broken bottles and nails. Floors and stairs that have been covered with mud can be very slippery.



Be alert for gas leaks. Use a flashlight to inspect for damage. Don't smoke or use candles, lanterns or open flames unless you are sure the gas has been turned off and the area has been aired out. Carbon monoxide exhaust kills. Use a generator or other gasoline-powered machines outdoors. The same goes for camping stoves. Fumes from charcoal are especially deadly—cook with charcoal only outdoors.

Clean everything that got wet. Floodwaters have picked up sewage and chemicals from roads, farms, factories and storage buildings. Spoiled food and flooded cosmetics and medicines are health hazards. When in doubt, throw them out.

Take good care of yourself. Recovering from a flood is a big job. It is tough on both the body and the spirit. And the effects of a disaster on you and your family may last a long time.

For more information, contact the AFT health and safety team at 4healthandsafety@aft.org