



STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES
BUREAU FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

Commissioner's Office

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IMPORTANT JULY 2017 FLOODING INFORMATION

TO: Local Health Departments
FROM: Rahul Gupta, MD, MPH, FACP
Commissioner and State Health Officer
DATE: JULY 30, 2017
RE: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Public Health is informing all Local Health Departments (LHDs) of important health information as a result of the July 2017 flooding occurring in the state.

Flood Clean-Up Precautions Reduce Illness

The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Public Health is encouraging residents to take precautions while returning to their homes to begin clean up to reduce injury and illness.

Disease producing bacteria are often carried by flood water and sewage. These bacteria can remain alive and dangerous for long periods of time on items covered or exposed to flood water or sewage.

After the flood waters have receded:

1. Before beginning any cleanup activities make sure electricity and gas is turned off to the house.
2. Follow the instructions of the utility companies relative to restoration of gas and electrical services.
3. Before entering any house or building that has been flooded, check for foundation cracks or shifting of the house on the foundation.
4. Drain or pump water out of flooded basements. (Don't pump out basements too soon after flood water has receded; the water soaked ground could cause the collapse of basement walls.)
5. Hose down all floors, walls and ceilings with clean water, both basement and house. This should be done before the surfaces dry, if possible.
6. Scrub all surfaces using soap or detergent and clean water (preferably hot).
7. Disinfect surfaces with a solution of laundry bleach (4 tablespoons of laundry bleach per one gallon of clean water).

To protect your health while working in flood clean-up:

1. While working, keep hands away from mouth and face.

2. Disinfect all wounds and dressed immediately.
3. Wear protective clothing (rubber boots, rubber gloves and eye protection).
4. Wash hands often using clean water and soap.

It is important to remember that clothing and some furniture and household furnishings can be salvaged by cleaning and disinfecting. However, residents should discard whatever item cannot be cleaned and dried. Mattresses, for an example, should be discarded.