

Flooding Fact Sheet

There are six basic areas of concern. These include:

1. the contamination of basements, buildings and surrounding yards by flooded sewerage systems
2. children playing in muddy yards or areas which have potentially been contaminated with sewage
3. spoilage of food due to immersion or by loss of electricity
4. contamination of swimming pools
5. deterioration of asbestos pipe coverings in flooded basements
6. possible rodent and insect infestation.

CELLARS AND BASEMENTS

Flooded basements should be pumped out and disinfected. After as much liquid as possible has been pumped out, any remaining solid wastes should be disposed of in plastic bags in an approved landfill. Mud should be removed when moist so that basement floors will dry more quickly.

All flooded floor and wall surfaces should be washed with a solution of two (2) capfuls of household bleach to one (1) gallon of water. Any household articles affected by flood waters should be washed with the same solution. Carpeting, mattresses and upholstered furniture should be disposed of or cleaned and disinfected by a professional cleaner. Disposal is recommended in any cases where sewage contamination is suspected.

A dehumidifier and fan should be used to eliminate the growth of mold and mildew once the cellar has been cleaned and disinfected.

WATER SUPPLY

Until the results are received from testing public or private water supplies, residents should either boil their water for approximately 20 minutes or drink bottled water.

YARDS/CHILDREN

Yards should be disinfected with a liberal application of lime if any evidence of sewage contamination exists. Keep all children and animals away from limed areas until lime is no longer visible.

Do not allow children to play in standing water or with mud in yards until the area has been thoroughly disinfected with lime.

FOOD SPOILAGE/IMMERSION IN WATER

Immersed food products should not be consumed. Canned foods that have not been immersed in water should be washed thoroughly with water and a mild disinfecting solution and then rinsed thoroughly with clean water prior to opening. Any bulging or dented cans should be discarded.

FOOD SPOILAGE/LOSS OF ELECTRICITY

Perishable food items should be cooked for immediate consumption or thrown away. Generally, foods stored in large freezers should be safe from spoilage for about forty-eight (48) hours if the freezer remains closed.

Residents should avoid opening freezer or refrigerator doors to the extent possible until such time as the electricity has been restored.

As long as temperatures in refrigerators remain below 45 degrees, stored foods should not spoil. Caution is advised during warm weather, as food will spoil more quickly above this temperature. The purchase of a thermometer for placement in refrigerators is recommended.

CONTAMINATION OF SWIMMING POOLS

Swimming pools should not be used until the water is free of any debris and the water is clear. Keep the filters running until the water is clear and then superchlorinate (shock treat) the pool. The chlorine level should drop to between 1.0 - 3.0 ppm before re-entry.

DETERIORATION OF ASBESTOS PIPE COVERINGS

If asbestos covered heating system and piping have been damaged and require removal, a certified asbestos removal contractor must perform this work. The Health Department and Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (617-935-2160), must be notified, in advance of asbestos activity.

RODENT AND INSECT INFESTATION

Discard debris such as garbage, (in a closed container) lumber, tree limbs, broken furniture and trash as soon as possible to prevent insect and rodent infestation.

If rodent and insect infestation persist, contact a certified pesticide control company.