



DON'T GET HURT AFTER THE STORMS

Louisiana health officials are urge people returning to residences damaged by hurricanes to be aware of health and safety dangers that remain close to home.

DHH offers the following safety reminders in post-flooding conditions:

Home Utilities: Gas, Septic and Electric Safety:

- If you are returning to a storm-damaged house, be particularly careful. Before entering the building, check for structural damage to be sure there is no danger of collapse. Turn off any outside gas lines at meter or tank and let the house air for a few minutes.
- If the electricity is off in the neighborhood, make sure your electrical power is turned off at the main breaker or fuse box.
- Don't turn on any lights, appliances, or gas systems until they've been tested.
- If the house has been flooded, electrical wires and appliances will have to be cleaned and thoroughly dried before they can be safely used again.
- If surface water is present, or the home plumbing system is not working, do not try to use the septic system.
- Carbon monoxide is odorless and can be deadly. Use a charcoal or gas grill only in an open, well-ventilated area, never inside the house.
- Do not connect an external generator to your home's electrical system. Connect appliances directly to the generator with properly sized polarized extension cords. Be sure the generator is properly grounded. Before refueling, let the engine cool for at least two minutes to prevent fires. Store extra fuel in a safe, dry area.

Debris Removal and Household Safety:

- Avoid debris and flooded areas, which can camouflage hazards. Watch out for loose or dangling power lines.
- Exercise particular caution in using power tools or tackling large debris, which can shift suddenly.
- Wear sturdy shoes or boots and protective clothing such as heavy pants, long sleeves and gloves when cleaning up debris. Stinging insects such as bees and wasps can become very aggressive after a storm.
- Falls are common; use safety equipment and get trained help with large or difficult jobs. Don't take chances and don't drink alcoholic beverages before or during the use of power tools.
- Handling and cleaning contaminated materials can result in dangerous exposure to mold, bacteria, viruses and other contaminants. Individuals with respiratory allergies, or other respiratory illnesses, should not handle or disturb materials that have visible mold growth.



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- Do not leave children unattended. Do not allow them to play in or explore damaged or flooded areas. Keep chemicals used for cleaning and disinfecting, fuel for generators, and pest-control substances out of reach of children.
- Be aware that animals are more likely to bite and be aggressive after a storm. Many wild animals may have been forced out of their normal surroundings by the hurricane.

Officials urge eligible residents with damage to their primary homes in federally declared parishes to register for assistance by calling **800-621-FEMA (3362) or 800-462-7585** (TTY) for the hearing or speech impaired. **The toll-free lines are open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. (CST) seven days a week until further notice.**



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