

**City of Detroit
Public Health Advisory: Floodwater Safety Precautions**

Detroit, Mich., – In response to widespread flooding in areas of Detroit, the Detroit Department of Health and Wellness Promotion, the Institute for Population Health and Office of Public Health Emergency Preparedness urges all Detroit residents to follow the precautions listed below.

Avoid flooded areas – stay out of any areas that are flooded to prevent injury or possible contamination from raw sewage. Do not drive on a flooded street to prevent damage to your car, and respect all road barriers. If you see a flooded area, turn around and seek an alternate route.

Do not consume floodwater or food items that may have come in contact with floodwater – to prevent major illness, throw out any food items that could potentially be contaminated. Contaminated food items should be placed in rat-proof containers and discarded, and any open containers of food should be considered contaminated. Tap water from your sink is safe to consume and use for bathing.

Take precautions when re-entering a flooded home – review the list below to ensure that you and your family stay safe during the clean-up process.

- Turn off all electricity and gas prior to clean-up to avoid injury. Contact your electric utility service department for assistance before attempting to disconnect cords, or open your fuse box or circuit breaker box in a flooded basement.
- While the home is still flooded, avoid flushing the toilet or using other water-connected appliances or fixtures.
- Carpets, upholstered furniture, toys, bedding and similar items not easily cleaned should be discarded. Items such as clothing should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. **When disinfecting items, use the ratio of ½ cup of bleach to one gallon of water.**
- After the sewage has receded, ventilate the basement thoroughly. Open all access windows and disinfect flooring and walls as high as they were wet. Use the above ratio for disinfectant solution.
- Check all affected pilot lights and burners on gas-fired or oil-fired appliances. Do not attempt to start any appliance if the motor controls were submerged in floodwater.

If your home is safe to inhabit after a flood, dry it out as quickly as possible – use a “wet dry” shop vacuum to remove water, use fans and dehumidifiers to remove moisture from the air, and have your home heating, ventilating, and air-conditioning (HVAC) system checked and cleaned by a maintenance or service professional who is experienced in mold clean-up before you turn it on.

In addition to these precautions, prevent future flooding by keeping all gutters and downspouts thoroughly cleaned, and ensure that crawl spaces in basements have proper drainage to limit water seepage. Flooding is the second-leading cause of death behind heat. Take precautions to ensure that you and your family stay safe.