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Food Safety and Flooding

Food safety precautions can make an important difference after a disaster occurs. Food can become contaminated as a result of flood. It also may spoil or become unsafe after a power outage.

If your area comes under an advisory that may lead to prolonged power outages take these steps to help keep your food safe:

- Turn your refrigerator and freezer to the coldest setting. This will help the food stay frozen.
- Purchase a 50-pound block of dry ice. This will keep food in a full 18 cubic foot freezer safe for 2 days.
- Wrap food in brown paper for longer storage. Separate it from direct food contact with a piece of cardboard.
- Fill partially filled freezers with crumpled newspaper to reduce air currents which will dissipate dry ice.

Generally, food will be safe if the power is not out longer than a few hours and the food temperature has been at 40°F or below. To prolong the life of your food the following measures should be taken.

- Group meat and poultry to one side, or on a tray, so their juices won't contaminate other foods if they begin to thaw.
- Be wary of using meat, poultry and foods containing milk, cream, sour cream or soft cheese.
- Don't rely on odor or appearance of food.
- If perishable food has been above 40°F for more than 3 hours, discard it.

In emergency conditions, the following food can be kept at room temperature (above 40°F) a few days. Discard anything that turns moldy or has an unusual odor or look.

- Butter, margarine
- Fresh fruits and vegetables
- Dried fruits and coconut
- Opened jars of salad dressing, peanut butter, jelly, relish, taco sauce, barbecue sauce, mustard, catsup, olives
- Hard and processed cheeses
- Fruit juices
- Fresh herbs and spices
- Flour and nuts
- Fruit pies
- Bread, rolls, cakes and muffins

Discard the following foods if kept for more than 4 hours above 40°F. Under disaster conditions it is better to be safe, discarding the food after two hours is recommended.

- Raw or cooked meat, poultry and seafood
- Milk, cream, yogurt, soft cheese
- Cooked pasta, pasta salads
- Custard, chiffon or cheese pies

- Fresh eggs, egg substitutes
- Meat topped pizzas, lunch meats
- Casseroles, stews or soups
- Mayonnaise and tartar sauce
- Cream filled pastries
- Refreeze thawed foods that still contain ice crystals or feel cold.

Check foods and discard any containing particles of glass or slivers of other debris. Discard canned foods with broken seams, bulged, or rusted.

Flood waters may carry contaminants such as silt, raw sewage or chemical waste. Disease bacteria in the water can also contaminate any food it touches. If you have experienced flood conditions, follow these guidelines:

- Save undamaged commercially canned foods (except as noted later).
- Do not use home-canned foods that have been covered with flood water. Commercial glass jars of food are safe if the containers are sanitized (except as noted later).
- Remove the labels from jars and cans and mark the contents on can or jar lid with indelible ink.
- Paper can harbor dangerous bacteria.
- To sanitize jars, cans, dishes and glassware, wash in a strong detergent solution with a scrub brush. After washing, immerse them in a solution of 2 teaspoons chlorine bleach per gallon of clean room temperature water. Air dry before using. If needed, clean empty glass also may be sanitized by boiling in water for 10 minutes. To sanitize metal pans and utensils, boil in water for 10 minutes.
- Discard wooden and plastic utensils, baby nipples, pacifiers and any other porous non food items that are used with food.

Discard the following foods:

- Meat, poultry, fish and eggs
- Fresh produce
- Preserves sealed with paraffin
- Unopened jars with waxed cardboard seals such as mayonnaise and salad dressing
- All foods in cardboard boxes, paper, foil, cellophane or cloth
- Spices, seasoning and extracts
- Home-canned foods
- Opened containers and packages
- Flour, grain, sugar, coffee and other staples in canisters
- Dented, leaking, bulging or rusted cans.

Disinfecting Wells

Wells will probably not be damaged structurally from floods, but they may be contaminated. Have your well tested before you use the water. IF the well is located in a low spot, it may be partly contaminated with silt from flood waters draining into it. If so, the well and entire water system should be disinfected. Pump the well until water is clear. Flooded wells should be disinfected before they are used as a source of drinking water. To disinfect a well:

1. Scrub the pump room and wash all equipment, including piping, pump and pressure tank.
2. Remove the well seal at the top of the casing. Pour a solution of 1 gallon laundry bleach and 3 gallons of water into the top of the well. **Caution: all electrical connections and wires must be water tight to prevent electrical shock or pump burn out.** Pour the solution so it washes down the inside of the casing and the outside of the drop pipes. In some wells you will need to remove a plug from the seal to pour the solution into the well.

Alternative Method-1. Pour one gallon of household bleach (5.25% chlorine) or the proper amount of stronger industrial chlorine (usually 11-12% chlorine) directly down the well casing into the well. 2. Connect a hose to a spigot and run water directly into the well until chlorine odor is present in the water coming out of the hose. Continue running the chlorinated water down the sides of the well casing for ten (10) minutes.

3. Leave the solution in the well about 4 hours. Then pump it into the pressure tank and distribution system.
4. Draw the chlorinated water into all piping by opening each faucet until the odor of chlorine is apparent. Leave the chlorine in the piping at least 8-24 hours. *Pour another gallon of bleach directly into the well. Recap the well or replace the vent pipe or plug.*
5. Run the water until the taste and odor are no longer detectable. The water should first be run to a ditch or dirt area until there is no chlorine odor so large amounts of chlorinated water are not run into the septic tank.
6. Your water should be tested for the presence of coliform bacteria before the water is consumed. There should be no chlorine in the water for this test if your system is not normally chlorinated.

Cisterns (i.e. Storage Tank) and Piping

Do not drink water from a flooded cistern or one of questionable safety until you disinfect the cistern and the entire piping system. To disinfect the cistern:

1. Use an auxiliary pump to remove the water and empty the cistern. Do not pump water through the pipeline distribution system.
2. Wash down the walls and ceiling with clean water and pump out the dirty water with an auxiliary pump.
3. Check the cistern walls, ceiling, and floor for cracks where ground water could enter.
4. Disinfect the interior of the storage tank and piping. Disinfect the entire system with a strong chlorine solution. Be sure the bleach contains no soap or scent. Use household laundry bleach (5.25%) check with local health department for recommended solution strength. A solution of 50-100 ppm chlorine should be used. Apply the chlorine solution with a sprayer or scrub with a stiff broom. Swab or pump out the disinfecting solution that collects in the bottom of the cistern.
5. Fill the cistern with water to disinfect the entire system. This water will have a high chlorine concentration and can not be used. Use the following example to disinfect storage tanks of different sizes. Multiply or divide the number of ounces of bleach per 100 gallon increments of water: 12.2 oz. in 100 gallons of water will achieve a 50 ppm chlorine concentration. Using 13 oz. will achieve a slightly higher concentration. If the water is cloudy, grossly contaminated, or contaminated with sewage double the amount of chlorine.

EXAMPLE: to disinfect 200 GALLONS of water, 13 oz X 2 = 26 oz of chlorine.

Restoring Flooded Water Systems

1. Do not start submerged electric motors until they have been cleaned, dried and checked for safety. Disconnect the motor. An ejector or jet pump motor may be a separate unit mounted on the pump, or the end bell of the motor may be part of the pump. The separate motor unit can be disconnected and serviced easily. With the second type, remove the pump and motor as a unit. It is not necessary to remove the drop pipes. Take the motor to an electrical repair shop. In submerged in mud and water, it should be thoroughly cleaned. Windings should be dried in a drying oven. The bearings should be lubricated before you use the motor again. Clean and dry electrical controls and pressure switches. Check all wiring for short circuits.
2. Pumps usually are damaged by sediment deposited in the bearings. Clean pumps. Check valves for silt and sand. Remove all dirt and water from the gears in the gear box and replace the lubricant with fresh oil.

Submersible pumps. The bearings on water-lubricated pumps will not be damaged by flood waters since these bearings are constantly submerged in water. As soon as possible, flush clean water down the casing to remove sediment and silt. Then disinfect the well.

Centrifugal pumps. Many centrifugal pumps contain two sets of oil-lubricated bearings along the drive shaft between the motor and the pump. If the pump has been flooded, dismantle the container bracket and remove the bearings. Clean the bearings, or install new bearings if the old ones are worn out. Close-coupled centrifugal pumps contain no bearings, so there is little chance of flood damage except to the electric motor.

Injector-type pumps. These pumps usually contain watertight packing at the ground surface, with sealed impellers. Flood waters probably will not damage this type of pump.

3. The storage tank and piping should be all right unless muddy water was pumped through it. If tank is contaminated, disinfect the entire system with a strong chlorine solution. Use 1 quart household laundry bleach or check with local health department for recommended solution strength. Open all faucets while the system is being filled. Do not close the spigot until a definite smell of chlorine is evident. Do not use the system for 24 hours. Then start the pump and run water from all faucets until the chlorine odor is gone.

Disposing of Animal Carcasses

Prompt and sanitary disposal of animal carcasses is necessary to protect human and living animals in an area from disease.

Search all pastures for dead animals as soon as possible. Carcasses may have some commercial value so send them to a rendering plant if possible. If rendering is impractical, dispose of the dead animals at your local approved Sanitary Landfill or on the premises. Use the following procedures:

1. Immediately after finding a carcass, bury it or secure it to keep away dogs and vermin
2. Bury other carcasses. Use power equipment if it is available.
3. Choose a site where subsurface drainage will not reach surface water or water supplies.
4. Bury the carcass at least 3 to 4 feet deep so predatory animals won't be able to reach it.
5. If quicklime is available, cover carcasses with it before backfilling. Quicklime will hasten decomposition.
6. Contact your local Solid Waste Office for location and times of landfill operation.

Floods in General

Floods are the most common and widespread of all natural hazards. Some floods develop over a period of days, but flash floods can result in raging waters in just a few minutes. Even very small creeks, gullies, culverts, dry stream beds or low-lying ground that may appear harmless in dry weather can flood. Wherever you live, be aware of potential flooding hazards. If you live in a low-lying area, near water or downstream from a dam, you must be prepared for floods.

Preparing for Floods and Flash Floods

Some simple advance preparation will help you be ready for possible floods in your area.

1. Know the flood warning system in your community and be sure your family knows the warning. Instruct family members in emergency procedures during a flood warning. If you live in an area subject to frequent or sudden floods, especially flash floods, you may wish to have family flood drills. Assign each family member an emergency task such as gathering emergency supplies, turning off utilities, or listening to the radio for instructions.
2. Flood proof your buildings. Install check valves in sewer traps to prevent water from backing up in sewer drains. Seal cracks in walls and floors with hydraulic cement. Place heavy screens over lower windows to prevent breakage from floating objects.
3. Be ready to protect appliances from minor flooding. Put a half-block of cement under each corner of refrigerators, freezers, washing machines and dryers. Use bricks or boards if you don't have cement blocks.
4. Identify fire hazards. During a flood, fire danger is increased. In addition, fire departments may be unable to get to fires through high water. Watch for these fire hazards on your property: -Broken or leaking gas lines -Flooded electrical circuits -Submerged furnaces or electrical appliances -Flammable or explosive materials coming from upstream.
5. Before flood waters crest, turn off the main power switch if you think the electrical circuits are going to be under water. Never Touch The Switch While You Are Wet Or Standing In Water. Do not turn the electrical system back on until it has been inspected by an electrician.
6. Know what a river height forecast means for your property, especially how far your property is above or below expected flood levels.
7. Know where to go in case of flooding. Remember that you must seek higher ground as quickly as possible, on foot if necessary.

8. If you are camping, know how far your campsite is above nearby waterways. Know how to seek higher ground. Stay out of known potential water paths such as dry creeks or river beds. If advised to leave the area, do so immediately.

Building Dikes To Prevent Minor Surface Flooding

Standing water from melting snow or heavy rains can flood basements and damage yards, wells, feed supplies, machinery and other property. Flooding is more apt to occur in areas with poor surface drainage systems or ice dams.

A 1- to 3- foot high sandbag earth dike offers protection from shallow flooding (water depth less than 3 feet). Contact a construction firm, lumber yard or Civil Defense officials for information on where to buy sandbags in the area. A sandbag dike can be constructed as follows.

1. Select the site for the dike, making the best use of natural land features to keep it as short and low as possible. Avoid trees or other obstructions which would weaken the structure. Do not build the dike against a basement wall. Leave about 8 feet of space to maneuver between the dike and buildings.
2. Remove ice and snow (down to the bare ground if possible) from a strip of land about 8 feet wide.
3. Fill and lap sandbags. Fill bags approximately half full of clay, silt or sand. Do not tie. Alternate direction of bags with bottom layer lengthwise of dike. Lap unfilled portion under the next bag. Tamp thoroughly in place. Build the dike three times as wide as it is high.
4. Seal the finished dike to increase its water tightness. To seal the dike:
 - Spread a layer of earth or sand 1 inch deep and about 1 foot wide along the bottom of the dike on the water side.
 - Lay polyethylene plastic sheeting so that the bottom edge extends 1 foot wide along the bottom edge of the dike over the loose dirt. The upper edge should extend over the top of the dike. (This plastic sheeting, available from construction supply firms, comes in 100-foot rolls and is 8 or 10 feet wide).
 - Lay the plastic sheeting down very loosely so that the pressure of the water will make the plastic conform easily to the sandbag surface. If the plastic is stretched too tightly, the water force can puncture it.
 - Place a row of tightly fitting sandbags on the bottom edge of the plastic to form a watertight seal along the water side. Place sandbags at about 6-foot intervals to hold down the top edge of the plastic. Place boards or dirt between these sandbags to prevent winds from disturbing the plastic. As you work, avoid puncturing the plastic with sharp objects or by walking on it.

Preventing leaks in Basements

Quick thaws or heavy rains can mean damp or flooded basements. Leaks in basements may be caused by cracked walls, improper grading, water in window wells or water pressure under floors. Crack : Watertight concrete is important to prevent water seepage in the basement. Fill cracks when the soil is dry, so cracks will be dry. It is best to fill cracks when there is no artificial heat in the basement so thin layers of mortar can cure.

1. Wide cracks (1/2 inch or more). Shape the crack like a V with a star drill or cold chisel. Fill with mortar. Chisel out the sides of the crack to make a V opening about 1 inch deep and 1 inch wide at the surface. Coat the crack with a creamy mixture of cement and water. With a trowel immediately fill the opening with a 1:2 mixture of cement and sand mortar (one amount of cement to two amounts of sand mortar). Or use chemically treated cement available at hardware or building supply stores.
2. Hairline cracks. Fill the cracks with a cement base paint. With a scrub brush apply a cement wash of Portland cement and water. Or check for other leak-stopping materials at your local lumberyard or hardware store.
3. The ground around foundations should slope away from the house at a rate of at least 6 inches in 10 feet. You should regrade by cutting and filling if you notice water standing along foundations or if the surrounding ground is flat or slopes toward the house.
4. Carry roof water away from the building by eave gutters and down spouts. Water from down spouts should be carried about 3 feet away from the foundation wall. Use splash block, down spouting or tile drain. Do not direct water from the down spouting into the drain around the footing.

Window Wells

1. Check window wells to be sure that surrounding ground ends a few inches below the top of the well.
2. To prevent water seeping down the outer surface and under the well, compact several inches of dirt around the well.
3. If there is tile around basement footing, dig a post hole inside the well to this tile. Fill with clean gravel if there is no tile around footing; improve drainage by laying drain tile from the bottom of the window well to a lower point in the yard.

Basement Floors: Water pressure under concrete basement floors may cause them to leak or buckle. To relieve this pressure:

1. Build a sump so water can run into it and be pumped out.
2. If there is a layer of clean gravel under the floor, drill a hole in the side of a floor drain. This will allow water to flow through the gravel to the drain, and will relieve the pressure under the floor.
3. Leaks sometimes can be diverted through concrete lined channels below or above floor level. Make a channel by chipping away floor and smoothing it with mortar, or by building a ditch above floor level. Carry the channel around the wall to a floor drain.

Cleaning Up After A Flood – Setting Priorities

Priorities will vary with the kind and seriousness of damage. Buildings may not be habitable during repair.

1. Examine building structure. Check foundation for settling, cracking or undermining. Examine walls, floors, doors and windows to determine what repairs are necessary. You may want to repair only temporarily until extensive work can be done.
2. If basement is flooded, start pumping the water in stages. Pump about one-third of the water each day.
3. Get the electrical system in operation. If the switch box is in a flooded basement, do not turn electricity back on until water has been pumped out. Take electrical appliances to a serviceman as soon as possible.
4. Get the water system in operation. Disinfect wells and water system.
5. Shovel out mud and silt before it dries.
6. Before they dry, wash down flooded walls and floors with a hose. Start at upper limit of flooding and work downward.
7. Scrub and disinfect walls and floors. Use a chlorine solution of household bleach - ¼ cup of bleach to 1 gallon of water. The solution will be strong; use rubber or latex gloves for protection. The solution may cause damage to clothing. (See Cleaning and Repairing Flooded Basements below.)
8. Start the heating system if possible to speed up drying. Before operating it, the heating system may need to be cleaned, dried and reconditioned. Make sure chimneys are clean before starting system.

Cleaning and Repairing Flooded Basements

Before you enter a flooded basement:

1. Turn off the electricity, preferably at the meter.
2. Check outside cellar walls for possible cave-ins, evidence of structural damage or other hazards.
3. Turn off gas or fuel service valves.
4. Open doors and windows or use blowers to force fresh air into the basement.
5. Do not use an electric pump powered by your own electrical system. Use a gas-powered pump or one connected to an outside line. Fire departments in some communities may help with such services. More damage may be done by pumping water from the basement too soon or too quickly, than from letting the floodwater remain. Water in the basement helps brace the walls against the extra pressure of water-logged soil outside. If water is pumped out too soon, walls may be pushed in or floors pushed up. To help prevent such structural damage, pump the water from the basement in stages. Remove about one-third of the water each day. Watch walls for signs of failing. If the outside water level rises again after the day's pumping, start with a new water line. The soil may be very slow to drain, but do not hurry the pumping. Whatever is submerged in the flooded basement will not be damaged further. By delaying the pumping, serious structural damage may be prevented.

6. After water has been pumped from the basement, shovel out the mud and debris while it is still moist. Hose down walls to remove as much silt as possible before it dries. Floors and walls may need sanitizing, particularly if sewage has entered the basement. Scrub walls and floors with one of these sanitizing solutions: Chloride of lime (25 percent available chlorine). Dissolve a 12-ounce can in 2 gallons of water. High test hypochlorites (65 percent available chlorine) stir 5 ounces into 2 gallons of water.
7. Oil stains in basements caused by overturned or damaged oil tanks may be a problem following flooding. Commercial products (such as Neutrodal) will help neutralize fuel oil. Products are available in powder form or an aerosol spray for hard-to-reach places. To remove oil stains and destroy odor, wipe up excess oil, shake or spray product on the spot according to manufacturer's directions, and let it set.
8. Check supporting columns, walls and floors. Structural damage to flooded basements usually includes buckled walls, settled walls or heaved floors.
9. Buckled walls are evidenced by horizontal cracking and walls moving out of plumb. When this condition is minor, you need not repair the wall immediately. However, any noticeably buckled wall will eventually collapse from normal ground pressures and seasonal temperature changes. When buckling has seriously weakened the wall, rebuild the damaged parts immediately.
10. Settled walls and footings are indicated by vertical cracks either in small areas or throughout the structure. Repairs are difficult without special equipment. Contact a reliable contractor for this work.
11. Heaved floors are those that have not returned to their original level, or have cracked badly. You may need to construct a new floor: Remove old, broken concrete. Place 6 inches of gravel fill on the basement floor surface. Cover area with a polyethylene vapor barrier. Lay a 4-inch concrete floor with water proof expansion joints between the floor and the walls. The floor should be reinforced with steel. Welded wire reinforcement place at mid-height in the slab is minimum reinforcement.
12. If a floor is badly cracked but has returned to its original level, and if there is sufficient headroom, place a new floor over the old one. Add a vapor barrier between the two floors. The new floor should be at least 2 inches thick.
13. In houses without basements, the area below the floor may be completely filled with mud. Remove the mud as soon as possible to avoid rotting joists or foundation wood. Jack up the house, if necessary, to make sure all mud is removed.
14. Dry out walls and floors. If necessary for proper drying, strip walls open up to water level. Drill holes in exterior siding. Complete drying may take months.
15. Repair buckled walls and floors.
16. Clean and dry household items, furniture, carpets, clothing, dishes and bedding. Disinfect when necessary.
17. Treat items for mildew as needed.
18. Care damaged trees, shrubs and lawn.
19. Repaint, repair, refinish as necessary.

Cleaning Flood-soiled Pillows and Mattresses

Mattresses

1. A good innerspring mattress should be sent to a commercial renovating company. Renovation is too difficult to do at home. Ask about the cost of the work. It may be less expensive to buy a good reconditioned or new mattress.
2. If a mattress must be used temporarily, scrape off surface dirt and expose mattress to sunlight to dry as much as possible. Cover mattress with a rubber or plastic sheet or mattress cover before using it.
3. If you decide to keep a flood-soiled mattress, it should be sterilized. This must be done at a sterilizing plant such as a mattress company. Have mattresses as dry as possible before taking them to a sterilizing plant. Use crop drying fans or household fans to speed up the drying process.

Feather Pillows

1. For feather pillows, if ticking is in good condition and does not contain red or yellow stains, wash feather and ticking together. Brush off surface dirt. Wash in machine or by hand in warm (not hot) suds 15 to 20 minutes. Use a disinfectant, following product directions for use. If using an automatic washer, wash no more than two pillows at one time. If washing by hand, rinse at least three times in clear warm water. Spin off water or squeeze out as much water as possible. Do not put pillows through a wringer. Dry in an automatic dryer at moderate heat setting. Put several bath towels in the dryer with the pillow to speed up drying. Allow about 2 hours. You can also dry pillows in a warm room on a sweater drying rack with a fan on them. Shake and turn pillows occasionally to fluff feathers and hasten drying. Or you can hang pillows on a clothesline by two corners. Change position end to end and shake occasionally to fluff feathers and speed drying.
2. If ticking is not in good condition or is stained with red or yellow mud, wash feathers and ticking separately. Find or make a bag of light weight, firmly woven fabric such as muslin. The bag should be two to three times larger than the ticking. Open one edge of the ticking. Pin the open edges of the ticking and the bag together. Shake feathers from ticking into bag. Sew seam in bag to close it. Wash and dry the bag of feathers, following directions for washing feathers and ticking together. Wash the ticking, using a disinfectant in the first wash. Follow product direction for use. Repeat washing until stains have been removed. Difficult red and yellow stains may need to be bleached or treat with rust remover. Avoid drying the ticking with heat until all stains have been removed. Transfer clean feathers to clean ticking, using the same method as for emptying the ticking. Sew seam in ticking to close it. Feathers will slide into the ticking more easily if ticking has been starched and ironed.
3. If pillows have been badly soaked with flood water, it may not be possible to remove all objectionable odors.

Polyester Fiberfill Pillows

1. Brush off surface dirt.

1. Wash in machine on gentle cycle or by hand in warm (not hot) suds, using a disinfectant. Follow product directions for use. If washing by hand, flush water through the pillow by compressing it. Do not wring or twist. Repeat if all stains are not removed
2. If washing by hand, rinse three times in clear, warm water.
3. Spin off water or press out as much water as possible by hand.
4. Follow directions for drying given for feather pillows.

Foam Rubber or Urethane Pillows

1. Brush off surface dirt.
2. Follow manufacturer's directions if available. Otherwise, wash in machine on gentle cycle or by hand in warm (not hot) suds, using a disinfectant. Follow product directions for use. If washing by hand, use a bathtub or large sink. Wash by pushing down on the pillow, releasing and pushing down again. Rinse the same way. Do not wring or twist.
3. Rinse well with lukewarm water.
4. Gently squeeze or spin out excess water. Blot with towels.
5. Dry away from heat or sunlight. Pillows may be tumbled in an automatic dryer on "air only" setting. Do not use heat. You can also air dry on a flat surface, turning regularly. Pillows may dry very slowly in the air.

Cleaning Flood-soiled Blankets, Quilts, Comforters, Linens

Wash only one blanket, quilt, or comforter at a time. Shake and brush to remove surface dirt. Follow manufacturer's laundering directions if available. Otherwise follow the directions below.

Wool blankets, Quilts and Comforters

1. Soak for 15 to 20 minutes in lukewarm water. Use a bathtub or large sink. Turn two or three times during soak period. Drain off water. Several soak periods may be needed if the blanket is very soiled.
2. Wash in lukewarm water with mild detergent and disinfectant appropriate for fiber content. Follow product directions for use. Immerse blanket and work suds through gently, using as little agitation as possible. If necessary, repeat washing procedure.
3. Rinse in clear water three or four times.
4. Gently squeeze out water. Hang blanket over two or more clotheslines. Let blanket droop between lines to distribute weight evenly. You can also use an automatic dryer set on low heat or air only. Remove blanket from dryer while it is still damp and hang over clothesline to finish drying. Gently stretch blanket into shape as it dries.
5. Brush blanket on both sides to raise nap. Steam press binding, using a synthetic setting. Quilts and comforters do not need brushing or pressing.

Synthetic Blankets (Not Electric)

1. Machine wash on gentle cycle in warm (not hot) water with detergent and disinfectant. Follow product directions for use. Repeat if necessary. Use bleach or rust remover to remove red or yellow stains. (Test before use because some bleaches and rust removers may remove or change the colors.)
2. Dry in automatic dryer on moderate heat. Add several towels to speed drying. You can also air dry on a clothesline.
3. Press binding if needed.

Electric Blankets

1. Avoid twisting, crimping and wringing the wiring.
2. Machine wash on gentle in warm (not hot) water no more than 5 minutes. Dissolve detergent in wash water before putting blanket in machine. Disinfect, following product directions. Do not use chlorine bleach as the disinfectant. Evenly distribute the blanket in the machine. Use cold rinse. Do not put blanket through a wringer.
3. Machine dry by preheating dryer at a moderate or warm setting. Add the blanket and allow it to tumble for 10 minutes. Remove blanket while still damp and hang over two or more clotheslines to finish drying. Straighten and shape blanket as it dries.
4. If washing by hand, follow directions for wool blankets. Electric mattress pads and foot warmer pads may be washed like electric blankets.

Sheets, Towels, Linens

1. Brush and shake off as much loose dirt as possible.
2. Soak or rinse mud-stained fabric in cool water in washing machine to remove some of the soil.
3. Wash in warm suds and disinfectant several times if necessary. Follow product label directions for use. Do not use hot water or dry with heat until all stains have been removed.
4. If stains remain after several washes, bleach with chlorine bleach. Rust remover may remove red or yellow stains. Test bleaches and rust removers before use because they may remove or change the colors.

Flooded Gardens

1. If flood waters have covered a garden, some produce will be unsafe to eat. The safety of unharvested fruits and vegetables will depend on: kind of produce, maturity of produce at the time of flooding, time of year flooding occurred, severity of flooding (depth of water and silt), duration of flooding, bacterial content of floodwater, and the likelihood of contamination from sewage or other bacterial contaminants.
2. In general, fruits and vegetables which were immature at the time of flooding should be safe to eat by the time they are ready to harvest. For additional safety, disinfect produce and cook it before eating.
3. Unless flooding was light and there is no danger of bacterial contamination from floodwater, do not use fruits and vegetables that were ready for harvest at the time of flooding unless they are disinfected, peeled and thoroughly cooked. Some fruits and vegetables are more susceptible than others to bacterial contamination.

Leafy vegetables such as lettuce, cabbage, mustard, kale, collards, spinach, Swiss chard, celery, and fleshy vegetables and berry fruits such as tomatoes, summer squash, strawberries and peppers are highly susceptible to bacterial contamination. Silt and other contaminants may be imbedded in the leaves, stems, or other natural openings of fleshy structures and can be difficult to remove. Root, bulb and tuber crops such as beets, carrots, radishes, turnips, onions and potatoes are less susceptible to bacterial contamination. Disinfect these vegetables, peel and cook them thoroughly before eating. Produce with a protected fruit or disinfected before the outer shell, skin or husk is removed. Then shell, peel or husk the produce and cook it if possible.

4. Thoroughly wash and disinfect any produce before eating. Wash in a strong detergent solution with a scrub brush. Remove all silt. Immerse produce for 15 to 20 minutes in a chlorine solution. Household bleach contains 5.25 percent chlorine. The amount of bleach to water should be 1 teaspoon/quart. Rinse thoroughly with safe drinking water. Peel if possible and cook thoroughly before eating.

Controlling Vectors after Floods

Rodents

1. Rodents often move into buildings to escape flood waters. They should be eliminated as soon as possible.
2. Eliminate rodent populations by poisoning. Use control measures as recommended by a professional Pest Controller. Be extremely careful when using poison or bait, especially if there are children in the house.
3. After infestation has been controlled, clean up harboring places. (Rodents may move into building when their hiding places are removed.) Remove trash piles and piles of damaged furniture or equipment. Store materials on platforms or shelves 6 to 18 inches above the ground for easier visual inspection.
4. Remove food sources. Store food supplies in rodent-proof bins or containers. Suspend garbage containers from trees or posts. Remove animal carcasses which may attract rodents. Do not leave scraps of food around.
5. Maintain several permanent bait stations in strategic locations, even after infestation has been controlled. This should eliminate rodents that can migrate from neighboring areas, and will help prevent another infestation. Inspect baits frequently and replace them with fresh material whenever necessary.

Insects

1. Eliminate breeding spots. Empty water from barrels, old tires, cans and other vessels. (This water may be polluted by flood waters and may be a health hazard, in addition to being a breeding place for insects.) Also, check clogged gutters and flat roofs which have poor drainage. Make sure cisterns, cesspools, septic tanks, fire barrels, and rain barrels are covered tightly. Whenever possible, drain ponds, pools or any standing water in which mosquitoes may breed. Dispose of refuse. Bury animal carcasses as soon as possible. Bury or burn garbage (wastes which will decay) at least once every week. Garbage needs to be kept in plastic garbage

bags or water/insect proof containers. Separation of garbage from rubbish (wastes which will not decay) will help to keep the quantities of garbage to a manageable amount. Rubbish can be taken to the landfill at a later time when life returns closer to normal. Burning of garbage should only be done when landfills are not able to accept or keep up with demand. Be sure garbage cans have tightly fitting lids. When using manure as fertilizer, spread it thinly so it will dry quickly and not support fly development. Clean up debris.

1. Patch screens and other places where mosquitoes may enter building. Paint screens with an insecticide solution recommended by a professional Pest Controller.
2. Use a household spray or an aerosol bomb to kill mosquitoes, flies or other insects that get into building. Do not apply oil-based sprays to flowers or ornamental plants. Spray shrubbery and shaded areas of building to kill adult insects. Contact a professional Pest Controller for specific recommended.
3. If possible, keep small children indoors, especially in the evening. Persons who must go outside at dusk should use a repellent on exposed parts of the body and clothing.

Flooded Private Sewage Systems

Flooding of a private sewage system can cause a hazardous situation for homeowners. Flooding of sewage systems may lead to back-up of sewage in the home and contamination of drinking water. The disposal of sewage waste depends on the ability of the soils to receive and treat the waste. When the ground is saturated with water, it seriously limits the ability of the soil to accept additional wastewater coming from a home. Saturated soil also limits the ability of the soils to properly treat the waste. When the soil is saturated or flooded, hazardous materials can enter the groundwater untreated and cause contamination of the drinking water. If flooded the water can exert enough force to cause the septic waste to back up into a home.

1. Minimize use of any water that may enter your septic system until flood water has receded. If the system is backing up or acting sluggishly, have your septic system pumped and checked by a licensed septic tank pumper. Septic tanks in flooded areas may have been filled with silt due to being inundated by flood waters, thus reducing the capacity of the tank and endangering the proper operation of the drain field, due to sludge and silt carry over into the drain field.

Tips for Minimizing Water Use

- Flush toilets only when necessary
 - Don't put any unnecessary water such as sump pump into the septic system.
 - Avoid using washing machines, dishwasher.
2. A word of caution. Empty tanks are buoyant and may pop out of the ground during flooding, therefore make sure the septic tank is full when flooding occurs and hold off pumping the septic tank until all standing water and possible high water table has gone down. This is to prevent the septic tank from popping out of the ground or moving which may cause lines to break.

1. If the drain field lines are filled with silt, a new system may have to be installed.
2. Septic tanks may contain dangerous gases. Only a trained specialist should clean or repair them.
3. If sewage has backed up into the basement, clean the area and disinfect the floor with a chlorine solution of ½ cup of chlorine bleach to one gallon of water.

Contact Eastern Idaho Public Health District for assistance and further information.