

## HEALTH DEPARTMENT

484 Broadway, Room 20  
Everett, MA 02149  
(617) 394-2255

HEIDI PORTER, MPH, REHS/RS  
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

## CITY OF EVERETT MASSACHUSETTS



## BOARD OF HEALTH

SEAN F. CONNOLLY, DPM  
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MEMBER

### **AFTER A FLOOD**

**Flood dangers do not end when the water begins to recede.  
Treat all water as if it were contaminated**

#### **Personal Safety**

- Look before you step. After a flood, the ground and floors are covered with debris, including broken bottles, glass nails and other sharp objects.
- Be alert for gas leaks. Use a flashlight to inspect for damage. Do not smoke or use candles, lanterns or open flames unless you are sure that the gas has been turned off and the area has been aired out.
- Carbon Monoxide exhaust kills. Only use camping stoves, generators or other gasoline-powered machines outdoors. Fumes from charcoal are especially deadly, so only use outdoors
- Avoid floodwaters. The water may be contaminated by oil, gasoline or raw sewerage (a source of bacteria and virus).
- Wash hands frequently with sanitizer or soap and clean water if you come in contact with floodwaters.
- Look for hazards such as broken or leaking gas lines, flooded electrical circuits, submerged furnaces or electrical appliances and damaged sewage systems.
- Dispose of all food that has come in contact with floodwaters. Canned food may appear fine, but is not worth the risk.

#### **Avoid mold growth by following these simple steps:**

- Stagnant water and moisture promotes mold growth. Remove the accumulated flood water and disinfect the area within 24 to 48 hours. After the water is pumped out, all flooded floor and wall surfaces should be washed with a sanitizer solution. Sanitizer solution can be simply mixed by using two (2) tablespoons of household bleach for each one (1) gallon of water. Remember to always wear water proof/ chemical resistant (latex or nitrile) gloves and safety glasses when using sanitizer. Never mix bleach with ammonia or other household cleaners. Mixing bleach with other cleaners will produce dangerous, toxic fumes. Open windows or use fans if necessary to dry out the flooded area after it has been sanitized. When in doubt, throw it out. Porous non cleanable items that should be thrown out include carpeting, carpet padding, upholstery, wallpaper, drywall, floor and ceiling tiles, insulation material, some clothing, leather, paper, wood and food. Removal and cleaning are important because even dead mold may cause an allergic reaction in some people.

#### **What else can you do?**

- If your home, apartment or business has suffered damage, call your insurance company or agent who handles your home or flood insurance right away to file a claim. Take pictures/video of the damage, both of the house and its contents for insurance claims.
- Be prepared for a potentially difficult undertaking. Recovering from a flood is a big job. It is rough on the body and the spirit. The aftereffects of this type of disaster on you and your family may last a long time. Consult a health professional on how to recognize and care for anxiety, stress and fatigue.

If you have any questions, you may contact the Health Department at 617-394-2255.

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**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT  
UTILITIES and SEWAGE - POST FLOODING:**

- ***If your basement is flooded, do NOT turn on your heat until your burner has been inspected by your plumber (gas heat) or oil technician (oil heat). The plumber or oil technician may restore your service if it appears to be operating normally. In addition, the City's Plumbing Inspector (gas heat) or Fire Prevention Inspector (oil heat) must approve the work done by these contractors.***
- ***If your basement is flooded and your breaker box has been submerged under water, do NOT turn on your electric service. Contact your electrician to do this work. The electrician may restore your power, however the City's Wiring Inspector must approve the work done by your electrician.***
- ***If your basement is flooded, and you suspect that there may be sewage mixed in with the flood waters, it is the recommendation of the Health Department that you clean and disinfect the impacted surfaces thoroughly or hire a professional cleaning contractor.***
- ***If you smell gas or think you smell gas, CALL 911.***
- **To contact the Plumbing Inspector please call 617-394-2220.**
- **To contact the Wiring Inspector, please call 617-394-2219.**
- **To contact the Fire Prevention Inspector, please call 617-394-2349.**