

Flood Safety Guidelines

Outdoors

Do not walk through flowing water. Drowning is the number-one cause of flood deaths. Currents can be deceptive; six inches of moving water can knock you off your feet. Use a pole or stick to ensure that the ground is still there before you go through an area where the water is not flowing.

Do not drive through a flooded area. More people drown in their cars than anywhere else. Don't drive around road barriers; the road or bridge may be washed out. A car can float in as little as two feet of water.

Stay away from power lines and electrical wires. The number two flood killer after drowning is electrocution. Electrical current can travel through water. Report downed power lines to [National Grid- 1-800-322-3223](tel:1-800-322-3223).

Indoors

Turn off your electricity if your building is flooded. If you don't feel safe doing this, call an electrician. Some appliances, such as television sets, can shock you even after they have been unplugged. Don't use appliances or motors that have gotten wet unless they have been taken apart, cleaned, dried and inspected by a professional.

Watch for animals. Small animals like rats and snakes that have been flooded out of their homes may seek shelter in yours. Use a pole or stick to poke and turn items over and scare away small animals.

Look before you step. After a flood, the ground and floors are covered with debris including broken bottles and nails. Floors and stairs that have been covered with mud can be very slippery.

Be alert for gas leaks. Use a flashlight to inspect for damage. Don't smoke or use candles, lanterns, or open flames unless you know the gas has been turned off and the area has been thoroughly aired out. If you have questions on gas, call [Columbia Gas of Massachusetts-emergency #-1-800-525-8222](tel:1-800-525-8222).

Carbon monoxide exhaust kills. Use a generator or other gasoline-powered machine outdoors. The same goes for camping stoves. Fumes from charcoal are especially deadly — cook with charcoal outdoors.

Clean everything that got wet. Flood waters have picked up sewage and chemicals from roads, farms, factories, and storage buildings. Spoiled food and flooded cosmetics and medicines are health hazards. **When in doubt, throw them out.**

Take good care of yourself. Wear gloves and boots. Wash your hands frequently during clean up. Recovering from a flood is a big job. It is tough on both the body and spirit and the effects a disaster has on you and your family may last a long time. Keep your eyes open for signs of anxiety, stress, and fatigue in you and your family.