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CC13 Emergency Flood Information... First Steps for those in Flooded Areas

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FIRST STEPS FOR THOSE FLOODED AREAS

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Emergency Flood Information

By Rollin D. Schnieder, Extension Safety Specialist

1. Before entering a building, make reasonably sure it is not ready to collapse; closely examine steps, stairs and porches. Flood-deposited dirt, when wet, is very slippery.
2. See that everybody is safe and out of danger from new flood crests, fire and falling buildings.
3. Give full information and cooperation to local authorities, rescue squads, and local Red Cross chapter, and your local civil defense officers.
4. Give special attention to cleaning children's toys, cribs, playpens and play equipment. Items a baby or toddler may put in his mouth should be boiled. Discard all stuffed toys and those that are not easily cleaned or are water logged.
5. Keep chemicals used for disinfection and poisons for insect and rodent control out of reach of children.
6. Arrange for shelter, food, clothing, transportation, medical supplies and hospitalization for the sick and injured.
7. Obey health regulations for personal and community protection against epidemics. Mass inoculations with typhoid vaccine are no longer recommended in the U.S., either under conditions of flooding or otherwise. Protection against tetanus may be highly important for flood workers who sustain a wound under flood conditions. See your family physician or local board of health for specific recommendations.
8. Wear protective clothing covering limbs, feet and hands while cleaning up debris and wear rubber gloves while scrubbing flood-damaged interiors and furniture.
9. Test plumbing fixtures by flushing with buckets of water. Have sanitary disposal systems inspected by health authorities.
10. Have water supply tested. Boil or chlorinate emergency supplies of drinking water. Use no food that has been contaminated. Destroy fresh or frozen foods that have come into contact with flood waters.
11. Start cleanup of premises as soon as floodwater recedes. Remove doors, clean and the dry house before trying to live in it. When entering buildings, use flashlights but no matches; do not turn on electrical lights, furnaces or fixtures until the wiring system has been checked for short circuits or similar defects. Be sure electrical appliances are dry and in good condition before using them.
12. Do not pump or drain your basement too soon. The additional pressure of saturated ground may cause basement walls to collapse. Wait until the surrounding flood waters are below the basement flood level.
13. Get stoves or heating plant to work as soon as possible to hasten drying. Remove sediment from heaters, flues and machines before using them.
14. Take all furniture and rugs outdoors and spread to air.
15. Start cleaning all bedding and clothing as soon as possible.
16. Delay permanent repairs until buildings are thoroughly dry.
17. Use insecticides where needed. Kill rodents. Avoid livestock diseases by moving stock to higher pastures.

18. Spread wet feeds to dry. Be cautious in feeding these to livestock. Watch piled hay for spoilage, heating, and fire hazard.
19. Dispose of animal carcasses promptly.
20. Submerged farm machinery should be taken apart, cleaned, and dried before it rusts. Motors or engines must not be started until they are cleaned and dried. Tractors should not be moved until bearings are cleaned.
21. Clear and open drains, ditches, channels, small streams and tile-drain outlets. Drain standing flood water if possible. Plug breaks in dikes; use temporary structures to stop breaks against recurrence of high water. Clear debris from lots and fields.
22. Avoid overexertion and strain in lifting and moving heavy objects.
23. Wash hands with soap and water after participating in flood cleanup, handling flood-contaminated articles or using the toilet.

For more information contact your county extension agent.

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