

## F L O O D   S A F E T Y

**Do not walk through flowing water.** Drowning is the number one cause of flood deaths. Most of these drownings occur during flash floods. Six inches of moving water can knock you off your feet. Use a pole or stick to make sure 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.

**Stay away from power lines and electrical wires.** Electrocutation is also a major killer in floods. Electrical current can travel through water. Report downed power lines to your utility company or local emergency manager.

**Turn off your electricity when you return home.** Follow the instructions in Step 2. 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, and dried.

**Watch for animals, especially snakes.** Small animals that have been flooded out of their homes may shelter in yours. Use a pole or stick to seek 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 are sure that the gas has been turned off and the area has been aired out. 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 only outdoors.

**Clean everything that got wet.** Floodwaters 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.** Recovering from a flood is a big job. It is tough on both the body and the spirit. And the effects a disaster has on you and your family may last a long time. Read Step 1 on how to recognize and care for anxiety, stress, and fatigue.

*Issued in furtherance of the International Decade  
for Natural Disaster Reduction.*