Garbage

- Store in watertight, rodent/insect-proof containers with tight-fitting covers.
- Use plastic liners.
- Pile in a convenient location but not near your well.

Hygiene

- Wash hands with soap and water that has been boiled or disinfected and cooled.
- Don't use flush toilets attached to septic tank that is covered with floodwaters.

Mold: mold growth can become a problem if wet materials are not thoroughly dried or discarded quickly. Mold can be a trigger for people with allergies or asthma. For information about mold and how to clean it up, visit www.health.ny.gov/environmental/indoors/air/docs/mold.pdf

More Information

Flooding - www.health.ny.gov/environmental/emergency/flood/docs/flooding_info.pdf

Information on What to Do After a Flood - www.health.ny.gov/environmental/emergency/flood/flood_advice.htm

When There's a Flood What you Need to Know to Protect Your Health and Safety - www.health.ny.gov/environmental/emergency/flood/docs/when_theres_a_flood.pdf

Flood Waters Pose Health Risks - www.health.ny.gov/environmental/emergency/flood/docs/flood_risks.pdf

Residential Oil Spills and Flooding What Homeowners Need to Know - www.health.ny.gov/environmental/indoors/air/docs/oil_spill_flood.pdf

Flood Recovery - Restoring Water Wells - www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/flooding/docs/private_wells.pdf

Flood Recovery - Sampling Private Wells - www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/flooding/private_well_sampling.htm

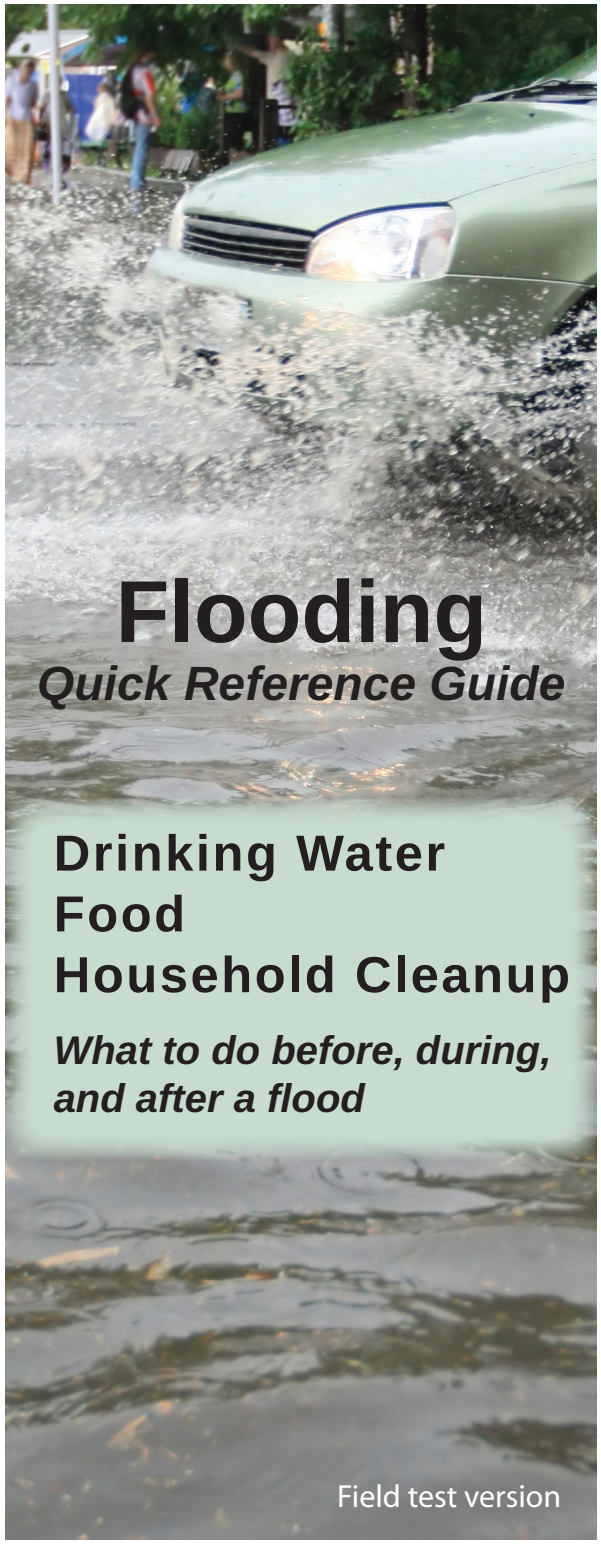
Health Checklist for Repairing Your Flooded Home - www.health.ny.gov/environmental/indoors/air/docs/flood_checklist.pdf

Flooding Fatal Injury Facts - www.health.ny.gov/environmental/investigations/face/facts/flooding.htm

Repairing Your Flooded Home - www.redcross.org/www-files/Documents/pdf/Preparedness/file_cont333_lang0_150.pdf

Call your local health department or
New York State Department of Health
518-402-7530 **800-458-1158**

Field test version 2/11
Please send comments to ceheduc@health.state.ny.us



Flooding

Quick Reference Guide

Drinking Water
Food
Household Cleanup

What to do before, during, and after a flood

Field test version

The Dangers of Flooding

- *Moving flood waters*
- *Pooling flood waters*
- *Contaminated water and food supply*

This brochure highlights important health and safety concerns to address before, during, and after major flooding. It is not intended to cover every type of flooding situation. More detailed guidance is available from the resources listed on the back and in **Don't Be Left in the Dark** *at* ***www.health.ny.gov/publications/7064.pdf***

Before

- Move important papers, electronics, and easily moveable appliances to upper floors. Place tools and cleaning supplies in a safe location.
- If the basement floods before you have a chance to shut off the electricity, do not enter the basement. Contact the power company as soon as possible.
- If you have to leave:
  - Turn off all electrical appliances.
  - Turn off electricity at the main fuse or circuit breaker, unless there is a sump pump.

  - Turn off water at the main valve.
  - Turn off propane gas by shutting off the service valve on top of propane tank.
  - Leave natural gas on unless local officials advise otherwise, but shut off all gas burning appliances (e.g., stove, water heater).
  - Drain the plumbing if it is likely the temperature in your house will go below freezing. Include
    - turning on highest and lowest hot and cold water taps,
    - flushing toilets and removing water from lower bowl,
    - leaving all taps open until you return.

During

- Listen for evacuation orders.
- Do not drive around barricades.
- Turn around if you come to a flooded road, whether driving or walking.

- If your car stalls in rapidly rising water, abandon it immediately and climb to higher ground.

After

Drinking Water

- Assume all water sources are unsafe until approved by your local health department.
- Use bottled water certified for sale in New York, or water from a state certified tanker.
- If your well has been covered over with floodwaters, it should be disinfected.
- Follow local officials' water usage restrictions to conserve water.
- If you must use water of unknown quality, it should be disinfected. (See disinfection directions on p. 15 of **Don't Be Left in the Dark www.health.ny.gov/publications/7064.pdf**).

Food

- Discard food without a waterproof container if there is any chance that it has come into contact with floodwaters.
- Commercially canned food:
  - Remove labels thoroughly.
  - Wash cans.
  - Disinfect with solution of ¼ cup unscented household bleach per one gallon of water and air dry.
  - Re-label cans, including expiration date.
  - Discard food containers with screw-caps, snap lids, and home canned foods if they have come in contact with floodwaters.

Household Cleanup for Major Flooding

- Wear rubber boots, waterproof gloves, goggles, and a facemask during cleanup.
- Remove standing water. If there is fuel oil floating on top of the water in a flooded basement, the oil should be cleaned up before the water is pumped out. Environmental contractors have special apparatus to contain the spilled oil.
- Remove wet materials.
- Discard items soaked by sewage or floodwaters that cannot be thoroughly cleaned and dried within 24-48 hours.
- Thoroughly wash walls, floors, closets, shelves, and non-porous house contents with household cleaners or soap and water. Disinfect with a solution of one cup bleach to five gallons water. *(*Be careful about mixing household cleaners and disinfectants together. Check labels for warnings).*

- Carefully clean surfaces that come in contact with food and children's play areas.
- Replace disposable filters in your heating/cooling system and any wet fiberboard and insulation.
- Clean and disinfect heating and air conditioning ducts that have been flooded. Consider hiring professionals for this service.
- Open windows and doors. If it is safe to use electricity, use fans and dehumidifiers during and after the use of cleaning and disinfecting products.