

DISASTER QUICK TIPS: Basic Health Safety

Handwashing

Scrub hands often with soap and water. Then use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if it is available. Wash hands:

- Before touching food or your face;
- After using a toilet;
- After touching items touched by flood water or sewage;
- After flood cleanup; and
- Dry off with paper towels if you have them, then throw towels out.

Clean Surfaces that Hold Food

Do all four steps to clean surfaces:

1. Use soap and warm, safe water;
2. Rinse with safe water;
3. Soak one minute with a mix of **one tablespoon** household chlorine bleach in **one gallon** of safe water;
4. Allow to air dry.

Food Safety

Do not eat – throw out – food that may be unsafe:

- Food likely to spoil;
- Food and containers of food and drink that may have been in contact with flood water, including unopened cans and bottles with screw caps and “pop tops;” and
- Food with an odd odor, color, or feel.

When in doubt, throw it out!



Environmental Health Division
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Drinking Water

If your water well has been flooded, it is most likely not safe to drink.

Use only water from a known, safe source for drinking, cooking, making ice or baby formula, dishwashing, or brushing teeth.

The safest water choices at this time are bottles of water you buy at a store or water boiled at a rolling boil for at least one minute. Local officials may have more information.

Use caution if you use flooded well water for bathing. Showering is not advised.

Gasoline Powered Engines

Gasoline engines are used to pump water or make power. Always use them outside -- never indoors.

Use gasoline engines away from enclosed spaces. Do not use in garages, open windows, doors, vents, or air intakes.

These engines make poisonous gases like carbon monoxide. This deadly gas has no odor, color or taste. It can cause illness or death.

Note: MDH has detailed fact sheets on these topics. See page 2.

MDH Environmental Health Flood Information

Website: www.health.state.mn.us/floods

MDH District Offices

Bemidji	218-308-2100
Duluth	218-723-4642
Fergus Falls	218-332-5150
Mankato	507-344-2700
Marshall	507-537-7151
Metro	651-201-4500
Rochester	507-206-2700
St. Cloud	320-223-7300

MDH Environmental Health Contacts

Website: www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/contactus.htm

Asbestos

Asbestos and Lead Compliance: 651-201-4620

Website: www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/asbestos

Carbon Monoxide and Mold

MDH Indoor Air Quality: 651-201-4601 or 800-798-9050

E-mail: health.indoorair@state.mn.us

Website: www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/air

Cleaning-up and Food Safety

MDH Food, Beverage and Lodging: 651-201-4500

E-mail: health.foodlodging@state.mn.us

Website: www.health.state.mn.us/foodsafety

Public Drinking Water

MDH Drinking Water Protection: 651-201-4700

E-mail: health.drinkingwater@state.mn.us

Website: www.health.state.mn.us/water

Wells and Well Water

MDH Well Management: 651-201-4600 or 800-383-9808

E-mail: health.wells@state.mn.us

Website: www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/wells

If you require this document in another format such as large print, Braille, or cassette tape, contact 651-201-5000 or 800-657-3908. For deaf or hard of hearing TTY: 651-201-5797