



## **FLOODING - SEPTIC SYSTEMS BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE FLOOD**

When the ground is saturated, pumping the tank is only a temporary solution. At worst it can cause septic systems to float out of the ground damaging intake and outlet lines, spreading raw sewage and potentially contaminating property, wells and groundwater. During flooding the best solution is to plug all drains in the basement and drastically reduce water use in the house.

### **REDUCE WATER USAGE**

- Sump pumps should not be connected to septic systems.
- Do not use a sump pump to add water from your basement directly into the septic system.
- Reroute water from roof gutters away from wastewater drain fields.
- Take short showers.
- Limit laundry and dishwashing.
- Turn off water while brushing teeth, shaving or rinsing dishes.
- Limit toilet flushes to solid waste only.

### **SEWAGE CONTAMINATION**

Flooding can cause wastewater systems to backup and leak into homes. Sewage contamination greatly increases the risk of disease that is spread to humans and animals. In the event of sewage contamination, professional disaster cleanup services are always recommended in order to ensure the health, safety of the environment and all involved.

- Remove and clean salvageable items. These are generally hard-surface, non-porous materials such as; hard-surfaced furniture, dishes, plastic items, etc.
- Remove all non-salvageable items and dispose of properly. Non-salvageable items include; carpets, carpet pad, area rugs, wet upholstered furniture & curtains, wet books & paper materials, stuffed animals, and mattresses. Clothing, towels, bedding, etc. can often be laundered or dry-cleaned and should be professionally evaluated.
- Remove contaminated materials such as; baseboard trim, drywall, wall paneling, and wall paper.
- Have a professional disaster cleanup service evaluate remaining building materials and structure to determine need for further demolition or cleaning.

- Remove any remaining moisture by pumping or mopping standing water, and drying area with fans creating a negative pressure environment to prevent contamination spread.
- Wash and disinfect contaminated areas. Begin by washing with household detergent to remove visible contamination and dirt. Disinfect with store-bought disinfectant or homemade bleach solution of  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup bleach to one gallon of water.
- Clean and disinfect contaminated equipment used during the cleanup process before storing or using them again.
- Ensure any damage caused from a sewage leak is addressed to prevent future leaks and contamination.

## DRINKING WATER AND PRIVATE WELLS

Check with reliable sources, such as your city or county for public announcements regarding the safety of municipal water supplies.

Once floodwaters have receded, there are several things you should remember:

- Do not drink well water until it is tested. Contact the Weber-Morgan Health Department.
- Do not use the sewage system until water in the soil absorption field is lower than the water level around the house.
- Have your septic tank professionally inspected and serviced if you suspect damage. Signs of damage include settling or an inability to accept water

For more information, see: <https://www.epa.gov/natural-disasters/flooding>