

FLOOD EMERGENCY INFORMATION

KEEP YOURSELF HEALTHY!

January 18, 2005

Consider all floodwaters contaminated.

Hand washing and Personal Health

- Wash your hands often even if you are working with gloves on.
- Check your tetanus vaccination. A booster is necessary every 10 years. Contact your health care professional, or come to Skagit County Public Health Department Mondays, Wednesdays or Fridays from 8:00 - 4:00 for a tetanus booster. There is a charge for this service.
- Work in protective clothing (boots, gloves, and coveralls).
- Treat cuts and abrasions immediately by cleaning them with pure water and using an antibacterial product to protect them. Do your best to protect them from flood water and mud.

Emergency Drinking Water A minimum of one gallon of water per person per day is needed for drinking, cooking and washing. Emergency sources of water inside the home include melted ice cubes, water from the toilet tank (not the bowl) and water pipes, and any vegetables, fruit, pop or juices.

Purifying water

- **First, strain** water through a cloth or paper filter.
- **Second, boil** water: Bring water to a rolling boil for 3 minutes.
 - **OR**, chemically sterilize when boiling is not an option. Plain household chlorine bleach (5.25 %) may be used. Bleach containing soap or fragrances is not acceptable. Add 1/8 teaspoon (or 16 drops) bleach to a gallon of water, stir and let stand for 30 minutes. If after 30 minutes, the water does not have a chlorine smell, do not use it.
- **Store** in containers that are clean and sanitary, glass or plastic.

Well Disinfection Bacterial testing of drinking water can be done at the Skagit County Public Health Department laboratory with bottles purchased from the Health Department. Samples are accepted Mon-Thurs 8:30 - 3 pm. Check at the County upriver office for bottles too (853-7009).

Food Safety If food has been contaminated by floodwaters, it is best to simply throw it out.

Onsite Sewage Disposal (Septic Systems) If floodwaters have covered your septic tank, pump tank and/or drainfield, do not use the septic system if possible, or minimize water use until flood waters completely recede. Don't flush the toilet every time, do laundry at a Laundromat, or skip a shower. The drainfield will be saturated due to higher water tables and surface water, and cannot adequately treat the wastewater from your home.

Mold and Indoor Air Quality. Mold growth can cause health problems later on so try to remove as much moisture as possible now.

- Remove standing water from floors, carpets, clothing, etc.
- Remove wet materials that cannot be dried within 48 hours.
- Flooded basements should be emptied only one-third of the volume each day, beginning once the surrounding floodwater has receded.
- Dry the inside of the house. Open windows, closets, doors, the attic, eaves, and other vents. Warm the house at least 15 degrees higher than outside temperature and open a few windows to allow for moisture to leave the house (make sure the electrical and gas systems are not hazardous first before using). To dry areas between walls, remove the baseboards and drill or punch holes in the wall about two inches from the floor.

Use caution when drying out your home.

- Avoid Carbon Monoxide poisoning. Carbon Monoxide can build up rapidly if certain types of combustion devices (such as gasoline-powered generators, camp stoves, lanterns, and charcoal-burning devices) are used indoors. Do not use combustion devices designed for outdoor use.
- Check for gas leaks. If you smell gas or hear a blowing or hissing noise, open the window and quickly leave the building. Turn off the gas at the outside main valve if you can and call the gas company from a neighbor's home. If you turn off the gas for any reason it must be turned back on by a professional.

Solid Waste, Chemicals, Animal Carcasses and Vectors

- Bag up all garbage and place in garbage cans and containers that keep rodents and other animals from getting into the garbage. Clean up debris such as flood damaged carpeting and furniture to eliminate hiding places for rats and mice.
- As soon as possible haul garbage to the nearest solid waste disposal site. The Skagit County Transfer Station (424-7807) and the Sauk Transfer site (853-8810) are the best locations to dispose of solid waste during and immediately after a flood.
- The Skagit County Transfer Station has a Household Hazardous Waste Facility (424-3873) that can dispose of chemical and hazardous wastes. The transfer station hazardous waste facility can dispose of fuels that are contaminated by water and other chemical wastes.
- Dead animals should be buried or contact a dead animal disposal company to pick up the carcass as soon as possible after floodwaters subside. Bury the carcass at least two feet below the ground surface. Bury the dead animal at least 100 feet away from drinking water wells or where streams or lakes are normally present.

CALL SKAGIT COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH FOR MORE INFORMATION OR VISIT THE WEBSITE AT WWW.SKAGITCOUNTY.NET

(360)336-9380