



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF

HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

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Safety Tips for Cleaning Homes Affected by Hurricane Sandy

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

- Open windows and doors to ventilate as much as possible while cleaning.
- Keep children and pets away from areas you are cleaning.

PERSONAL PROTECTION

- Wear waterproof gloves and boots during cleanup. Remove and wash clothing after working.
- Use a dust mask and safety glasses if cleaning will produce dust.
- Wash hands and face with soap and water before eating or drinking.

ELECTRICAL

- If you had flooding or structural damage, have a licensed electrician or utility company inspect your electrical system before using electricity.
- Do not enter rooms with standing water unless power is turned off at the main switch.
- Never use electrical power tools in wet areas.

GAS

If you smell gas, open windows and call your utility company.

FUEL OIL

If you have a home heating oil tank and it has leaked and/or has been damaged by the storm, call the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation at 718-482-7376 (9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., seven days a week). Keep flames away from the area.

PREVENT CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING

Never use portable generators or gas-powered tools indoors, in garages or near open windows. Never use your stove or a portable gas heater to heat your home. Never use barbecue grills to cook indoors.

WET BUILDING MATERIALS

- In general, discard damaged or porous building materials, including ceiling tiles, drywall/sheet rock and paneling. If wallboard is soaked, cut at least six inches above the watermark and discard.
- Remove and discard wet wall insulation. Other insulation, such as around old pipes and boilers, may contain asbestos. If you are unsure if there is asbestos in the damaged insulation, contact a licensed asbestos contractor. Do not remove it yourself.

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

- Most surfaces and items can be cleaned effectively with soap or detergent and water.
- To disinfect materials and surfaces that came in contact with sewage, add one cup household bleach to two gallons water. Never mix bleach with ammonia or other cleaners.
- If your belongings came in contact with fuel oil or other household chemicals, wash them thoroughly with detergent and water. Do not put contaminated clothing in a dryer until all oil is removed.
- Throw away food (including packaged food) that came in contact with flood water or was not properly refrigerated. ***If in doubt, throw it out.***
- Throw out damaged or contaminated belongings in plastic garbage bags with regular trash.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

If your home was built before 1978, it may contain lead-based paint. Never dry sand or dry scrape lead paint. Use wet methods to remove lead paint.

Note: Unless otherwise notified, it is safe to drink New York City tap water in areas with flooding.