



Returning Home After the Disaster

When you are able to return home following a disaster, the American Red Cross suggests the following:

Before Returning	Items to Take
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Follow the advice of local authorities. Find out if it is safe to enter your community or neighborhood. <input type="checkbox"/> Carry cash as ATMs may not work and stores may not be able to accept credit or debit cards. <input type="checkbox"/> Bring supplies, such as bottled water, non-perishable food, flashlights and batteries, in case utility services are not working. <input type="checkbox"/> Make back-up communication plans with family and friends, in case you are unable to call from affected areas. <input type="checkbox"/> Plan for delays when traveling: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Carry a map to help you detour around heavy traffic and impassable roads. ▪ Keep the fuel tank of your vehicle as full as possible while traveling, in case stations down the road are crowded, out of fuel or closed. ▪ Bring extra food, water, pillows, blankets or other items that will make the trip more comfortable. <input type="checkbox"/> Find out if local medical facilities are open and if emergency services (such as 9-1-1) are functioning again (NOTE: do NOT call the emergency number to check that it works.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Government issued photo id (driver's license), proof of address <input type="checkbox"/> Important phone numbers <input type="checkbox"/> Maps to find optional routes <input type="checkbox"/> Plenty of bottled water <input type="checkbox"/> Non-perishable foods <input type="checkbox"/> First aid kit
<p>First Inspection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Look for loose power lines, broken or damaged gas lines, foundation cracks and other exterior damage that may indicate it is dangerous to enter the home. <input type="checkbox"/> Smell for gas. If you detect a natural gas or propane odor or hear a hissing noise, leave immediately and contact the fire department or utility company. <input type="checkbox"/> Enter briefly to open doors and windows and let the house air out for at least 30 minutes before staying inside for any length of time, if your home was closed for more than 48 hours. <input type="checkbox"/> Turn the main electrical power off at the home until you or a professional can ensure that your system is safe. NEVER turn power on or off or use an electric tool or appliance while standing in water. <input type="checkbox"/> Turn off the water system at the main valve and check for leaks to help prevent additional water damage. Avoid using sinks, showers and toilets if you suspect sewage lines are damaged. <input type="checkbox"/> Assume your home is contaminated with mold if your home was flooded. Mold increases health risks for people who have asthma, allergies or other respiratory conditions. <input type="checkbox"/> Check the ceiling and floor for signs of sagging. This may indicate water trapped in the ceiling or weakened floors that you should avoid. <input type="checkbox"/> Beware of rodents, snakes, spiders, insects and other wild animals that have wandered onto the property or entered your home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Cleaning supplies, trash bags <input type="checkbox"/> Personal cleanser (soap and clean water or alcohol-based hand cleaning gel) to use after cleaning, using restroom, changing diapers, before handling food <input type="checkbox"/> Hygiene products (toilet paper, other personal products) <input type="checkbox"/> Insect repellent <input type="checkbox"/> Long sleeved shirts, long pants
<p>Cleaning Your Home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Wear protective clothes, including rubber gloves and rubber boots, when cleaning homes with flood damage. <input type="checkbox"/> Throw out all food, beverages and medicine exposed to floodwaters and mud, including canned goods, capped bottles and sealed containers. <i>When in doubt, throw it out.</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Throw out all items that cannot be cleaned and disinfected, including mattresses, carpeting, carpet padding, rugs, upholstered furniture, cosmetics, stuffed animals, baby toys, pillows, foam-rubber items, books and paper products. <input type="checkbox"/> Clean hard surfaces thoroughly with hot water and soap or detergent, including flooring, concrete, walls, molding, metal and non-absorbent hard wood furniture, countertops, appliances, sinks and plumbing fixtures. Use two buckets of water, one for washing and one for rinsing. <input type="checkbox"/> Open windows and leave your home if fumes from mixed chemicals cause a strong odor or watery eyes. Some cleaning solutions may cause toxic fumes and other hazards if mixed. <input type="checkbox"/> Remove drywall and insulation soaked by floodwaters. Be careful when moving furnishings and debris since they may be waterlogged and heavy. It is OK to ask for help. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Sturdy work gloves, closed toe shoes or boots with rubber soles <input type="checkbox"/> Safety goggles, dust mask <input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight, portable radio, extra batteries <input type="checkbox"/> Camera to take photos of damage for insurance claims (disposable camera may be used)

Emotional Care	Safety	Children
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Take care of yourself by getting enough rest and drinking plenty of water. <input type="checkbox"/> Understand that recovery takes time. Practice patience. <input type="checkbox"/> Pace yourself and ask for help. Reach out to help others and accept their help. <input type="checkbox"/> Return to as many personal and family routines as possible. Do things you and your family or household enjoy. <input type="checkbox"/> Recognize your own feelings and understand others may not feel the same. <input type="checkbox"/> Stay connected with your family and other support systems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Mold can cause an odor, even if you can't see it. ▶ Mold can be dangerous, causing asthma attacks, stuffy nose, irritated eyes, wheezing and skin irritation. If allergic, swelling and difficulty breathing is possible. <div style="border: 2px solid red; background-color: red; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center; margin: 10px 0;"> ALERT: Carbon Monoxide Can Be Fatal </div> <p>NEVER use a generator indoors, in a garage, basement, crawl space, under a carport, or in any partially enclosed areas, even if there is ventilation. Place generators away from doors, windows and vents that could allow carbon monoxide inside your home.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Leave children with a relative or friend while conducting the first inspection of your home. <input type="checkbox"/> Throw out toys, books and other belongings soaked by floodwaters that cannot be cleaned and disinfected, including stuffed animals, baby toys, pillows, foam-rubber items, books, and other items that can absorb liquid. <input type="checkbox"/> Involve children in recovery activities. <input type="checkbox"/> Watch children closely; be aware of dangerous conditions. Injuries from debris and other hazards are common after disasters. <input type="checkbox"/> Re-establish familiar routines. <input type="checkbox"/> Talk to children honestly about what is happening, and in a way they can understand. <input type="checkbox"/> Be respectful, patient and listen to your child's concerns and fears. <input type="checkbox"/> Contact the American Red Cross for assistance from licensed professionals who have expertise with helping children cope and families deal with disaster stress.
Additional Resources		

- Refer to the American Red Cross publication, **Repairing Your Flooded Home**, for more information. Available online at www.redcross.org/yourfloodedhome.
- For more information on hurricane recovery and health concerns, visit the **Red Cross Disaster Assistance and Resources** page at katrina.redcross.org, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes.
- Call or visit your local **American Red Cross** chapter for assistance or visit www.redcross.org.
 - ▶ Look for missing loved ones: **1-877-LOVED-1S** (1-877-568-3317) or click Family Links Registry on www.redcross.org.
 - ▶ Get information on Red Cross shelters: **1-866-GET-INFO** (866-438-4636)
 - ▶ Apply for Red Cross emergency financial assistance: **1-800-975-7585**
- Register with FEMA for disaster assistance: (800) 621-FEMA (3362) or visit www.fema.gov.
- Call your local Salvation Army or visit: www.salvationarmyusa.org.
- Visit National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters for other national and state organizations that can help: www.nvoad.org.
- Look in the blue pages (government section) of the phone book for state and county offices of emergency preparedness.

Additional Resources & Important Numbers:

Write the local phone numbers of emergency services below. Use remaining space to list names and telephone numbers for insurance agents, contractors, schools your children attend, utility companies, employment assistance, housing and other recovery resources and information.

POLICE: 9-1-1 or _____

FIRE: 9-1-1 or _____

AMBULANCE: 9-1-1 or _____

National Poison Control Center: 1-800-222-1222 _____

