



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY



MASSACHUSETTS EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
400 Worcester Road

Framingham, MA 01702-5399
Tel: 508-820-2000 Fax: 508-820-2030
Website: www.mass.gov/mema

Deval L. Patrick
Governor

Don R. Boyce
Director

Timothy P. Murray
Lieutenant Governor

Mary Elizabeth Heffernan
Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 19, 2010

Peter Judge, MEMA PIO
(508) 820-2002

CAUTION RECOMMENDED UPON RETURN TO FLOOD DAMAGED HOME

The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) urges that residents take extra precautions as they return to their flood-damaged homes, apartments or businesses. MEMA cautions that all danger has not passed simply because the water has receded and the structure appears safe.

Hazards include contaminated floodwater, exposed electrical wires and weakened structures.

Before Entering the Building:

- Check the outside for downed wires or gas leak. If detected, notify your utility.
- Look for external damage, particularly cracks in the foundation. If you find obvious damage, have a building inspector check the integrity of the structure before you go in.
- Enter the building carefully. If the door sticks at the top as it opens, the ceiling could be sagging and ready to collapse.

Once Inside the Building:

- Look before you step as floors and stairs may be covered with debris and may be very slippery.
- Be alert for gas leaks. Do not strike a match or use an open flame unless you know the gas has been turned off and the area has been ventilated. Use a flashlight to inspect damage.
- Safely turn off all utilities. Even if the utility company has turned off electrical power to the area, you should immediately shut off the electrical system at the circuit breaker. Have all utility connections inspected before resuming use.
- Document damage with photographs or video
- Do not run appliances or motors that have gotten wet until they are cleaned and dried.
- Pump out basements gradually, about 1/3 per day to avoid structural damage.
- Anticipate mold. Within days of being waterlogged, drywall, furniture and carpets may develop mold or mildew if not dried and cleaned immediately.

-more-

- Dress for safety, wearing a disposable dust mask inside the house to filter mold spores, asbestos, or other contaminants. Wear safety glasses, protective gloves and footwear.
- Hose down the house, as many health hazards are found in the mud and silt that floodwaters leave behind. Shovel as much mud as possible out of the house, then hose it down, inside and out.
- Be aware of health hazards, as floodwaters pick up sewage and chemicals from roads, farms, factories and storage buildings. Clean and disinfect all items both inside and outside that were exposed to floodwaters.
- When in doubt, throw it out; however do not turn your yard into a dump. Have debris hauled away before it causes additional health concerns.

The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) is the state agency responsible for coordinating federal, state, local, voluntary and private resources during emergencies and disasters in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. MEMA provides leadership to: develop plans for effective response to all hazards, disasters or threats; train emergency personnel to protect the public; provide information to the citizenry; and assist individuals, families, businesses and communities to mitigate against, prepare for, and respond to and recover from emergencies, both natural and man made. For additional information about MEMA and Winter & Flooding Preparedness, go to www.mass.gov/mema. Follow MEMA updates on Facebook and Twitter.

-30-

Region I
P.O. Box 116
365 East Street
Tewksbury, MA 01876
Tel: 978-328-1500 Fax: 978-851-8218

Region II
P.O. Box 54
12-I Rear Administration Road
Bridgewater, MA 02324-0054
Tel: 508-697-3600 Fax: 508-697-8869

Region III / IV
1002 Suffield Street
Agawam, MA 01001
Tel: 413-821-1500
Fax: 413-821-1599