



After the flood

Steps to Safety

1 Returning Home

Electrical Safety

- Beware of potential damage to utilities (gas and electric) from water.
- Wet or flooded fixtures and wires present a risk of electrical shock or fire.
- Do not use electricity until your power company has said it is safe to do so.
- Call a licensed contractor to work on utilities, appliances and any structural damage.

Generator Safety

- Never use a generator indoors or in enclosed spaces such as garages, crawl spaces or basements.
- Operate generators away from doors and windows so that carbon monoxide does not enter the home.
- Provide 3 to 4 feet of clear space on all sides and above the generator for adequate ventilation.
- Allow generators to cool completely before refueling; fuel can ignite when spilled on hot engine parts.

Drinking Water Safety

- Do not drink water from your well or water system until it has been tested and you know it is safe. Until then, **use bottled, boiled, or treated water for drinking, cooking, cleaning or bathing.**
- Boiling water kills most harmful bacteria and parasites.
- **To disinfect water for drinking:**
 - Bring water to a rolling boil for one minute to kill most organisms.
 - As an alternative, you can disinfect water using household bleach. Do not use bleach that contains perfume, dyes, or other additives. Use 1/8-teaspoon per 1 gallon of water, mix thoroughly, and then let stand for 30 minutes before using. If the water is cloudy, use ¼-teaspoon per 1 gallon of water.
- Containers for storing water should be rinsed with a bleach solution before re-using them. Use water storage tanks and other types of containers with caution. Water storage tanks, as well as previously used cans or bottles, may be contaminated with germs or chemicals.
- Disinfect your well (see page 3).

Safety Checklist

- Wait for flood waters to recede
- Report downed power lines
- Report gas leaks
- Check for structural damage
- Turn off electricity
- Turn off gas or fuel

Phone Numbers*

Puget Sound Energy:
1-888-225-5773
Drinking Water: 867-2673
Lab: 867-2631
Septic Systems: 867-2673
Food Safety: 867-2667
Immunizations: 867-2524
Hazardous Waste:
867-2664
Dept of Ecology:
407-6000

Call **911** in the event of an emergency or life-threatening situation

*local area code is 360

Disinfecting Water

For Drinking: 1/8 teaspoon unscented bleach to 1 gallon water
- or -
Bring water to a rolling boil. Boil for 1 minute.
For Cleaning: 1 cup bleach to 5 gallons water

2 Cleaning-up

Dry out your home and check for mold/mildew.

- Open outside doors and windows.
- Open closet doors and cabinets.
- Circulate the air with fans.
- Run a dehumidifier.
- Turn on the heat in your home when you know it's safe to use electricity and run your furnace.

Remove water-soaked items

- Carpets, furniture, and other absorbent items such as wall coverings, area rugs, drywall and insulation can't be disinfected and should be thrown away.
- Sort items to be repaired, thrown away, or disinfected.

Gather cleaning supplies

- You'll need mops, buckets, clean rags or sponges, water-proof gloves, cleaning products, and disinfectants.
- Use a shovel for clearing mud.

Clean & disinfect one room at a time

- Wear water-proof gloves and shoes, and a dust mask
- Use two buckets for cleaning; one for cleaning solution, and the other for rinsing. Rinse mops, sponges, or cloths frequently, wringing them out before re-wetting them in the cleaning solution.
- Change rinse water frequently.
- After cleaning a room, surface or item, disinfect it to kill the germs and odor left by the floodwaters.
- Disinfect surfaces that come in contact with food such as counter tops, pantry shelves, refrigerators, etc.
- Carefully clean and disinfect children's play areas and toys.
- Wash all linens, clothing, and drapes in hot water, or dry clean them. If you have a septic system, use a laundromat for washing large quantities of clothes and linens until your septic system has been professionally inspected.

After the cleanup

- Wash your hands with soap and bottled, boiled (allow the water to cool), or disinfected water.
- Seek immediate medical attention if you become ill.

3 Disease Prevention

- There is risk of disease from eating or drinking anything contaminated with flood water; don't eat or drink anything contaminated with flood water and avoid bare skin contact with anything contaminated by flood water.
- Practice good hygiene; use soap and bottled, boiled or disinfected water when washing your hands. Wash your

Always Throw Out

- Cosmetics
- Medicine & medical supplies
- Stuffed animals
- Mattresses & pillows
- Upholstered couches & chairs
- Carpet padding
- Cardboard
- Foam rubber

Usually Throw Out

- Large carpets & rugs
- Books & paper products
- Food (see Food Safety for more information)
- Walls, (lath and plaster or plasterboard), that have been saturated and are soft to the touch should be removed and replaced. If the surface has only been wetted, clean as for a hard surface, taking care not to saturate the plaster.

Cleaning Solutions

- 1st Choice:** Non-sudsing household cleaners.
- 2nd Choice:** Laundry soap or detergent.

Disinfecting Solutions

- 1st Choice:** A solution of 1 cup liquid bleach to five gallons of water.
- 2nd Choice:** Household disinfectant such as quaternary phenolic or pine oil disinfectants (check labels).

hands thoroughly after handling articles contaminated with flood water or sewage.

- Keep cuts or sores out of contact with flood water; wash them well with soap to control infection. If infection (redness, swelling, or drainage) develops, seek medical attention.
- If you get a deep wound and it has been five years or more since your last shot, you may also need a tetanus booster. For minor wounds and as good health practice, teens and adults should have a tetanus booster every 10 years.

Water-borne illness

- Do not allow children to play in flood water areas.
- Wash children's hands frequently (especially before meals).

Disinfect your well

- If your water is cloudy, let water run for 10-15 minutes before disinfecting.
- Chlorinate the well using household bleach (chlorine concentration of about 6%). Do not use concentrated or scented bleach. See table (right) for amount of bleach to use.
- Mix bleach in a bucket of water. Remove well cap, plug, or vent; using a funnel, pour the bleach into your well.
- Attach a hose to the nearest outside faucet and allow the water to run onto the ground for 1-2 minutes until you smell chlorine. Place the hose in the hole where you poured the bleach; allow the water to run back into the well for 15-20 minutes.
- Remove the hose and replace the well cap, plug, or vent.
- Chlorinate the lines; turn on each tap attached to the well (kitchen, bathroom, outdoor spigot, etc.), starting with the nearest tap to the well, and let the water run until you smell bleach, turn off and then go to the next tap.
- Turn off electricity to the pump and let sit overnight.
- Flush the chlorinated water out of the system; choose any outdoor spigot and let the water run onto the ground, away from your septic system (keep water flow from going into creeks, streams, or where fish or vegetation can be harmed), until you no longer smell bleach.
- Turn on each indoor faucet until you no longer smell bleach.
- Once the system has been flushed, the water can be used for laundry and bathing; wait to use it for drinking, brushing teeth, making ice or preparing food until it has been sampled and deemed safe.
- Wait 3-4 days after flushing the bleach out to collect coliform bacteria samples.
- Coliform testing should be done by an approved lab.
- Contact the lab for samples bottles and sampling instructions.

Disinfecting a 6" Cased Well

Water Volume* (Ft)	Amount of Bleach (Cups)
30	1.5
60	2
100	2.5
130	3.5

*Add 2 cups of bleach if water volume is not known

Beware of Hazardous Products

- Flood waters have the potential of carrying chemicals you may encounter during flood recovery.
- Flood waters and mud may have moved or buried containers of cleaners, solvents or chemicals. The containers may be damaged or leak. Be careful working with or around them
- Take damaged containers of hazardous products to HazoHouse (see back).
- If you find a large propane tank or 55 gallon drum of a hazardous substance, do not attempt to move them yourself. Damaged propane tanks present fire or explosion danger; contact your local fire department or the Dept of Ecology immediately.

4 Food Safety

Foods to Discard

- Any food that has been contaminated by flood water should be thrown away.
- Food in containers with screw caps, snap-lids, crimped caps (soda pop bottles), twist caps, flip tops, and home canned foods cannot be disinfected and should be discarded if they have been exposed to flood water.
- Any frozen or refrigerated perishable foods like meat, dairy products, fish and poultry that have been at room temperature for two hours or more.
- Any food that has an unusual odor, color, or texture.

Foods that can be kept

- Undamaged, commercially canned foods can be saved. Remove labels from cans. Wash and disinfect cans with a solution of one (1) cup of bleach to five (5) gallons of warm water. Re-label the cans, including expiration date, with a new label or permanent marker.

Precautions to take

- Breast feed infants or use only pre-prepared, canned baby formula (not condensed, dried or requiring added water). If your water supply is safe then you can prepare formula the usual way.
- Your refrigerator will keep foods cool for about 4 hours without power; add block or dry ice to your refrigerator if you think the electricity will be off for more than 4 hours.
- Use bottled, boiled or disinfected water for food preparation.
- Prepare food on or in cleaned and disinfected surfaces or containers.

5 Protecting your Septic System

Limit water usage if your septic tank or drainfield are flooded or under water or the power is out.

- Take laundry to a laundromat.
- Standing water over the drainfield may be contaminated by sewage; avoid contact.
- The septic system can be used normally once the flood waters recede if sewage is not surfacing or there is no damage to the system.

For septic systems with pumps or electronic controls

- Turn off the pump at the control panel.
- When power is restored, switch the pump on and let it run for no more than five minutes; turn it off. Repeat this cycle every six hours until the pump turns off automatically.

Take Hazardous Waste to HazoHouse

What to take:

- Oil-based paints & stains
- Pesticides
- Fertilizers
- Fuels
- Motor oil (used or unused)
- Unused cleaners, solvents & other chemicals
- Propane tanks 5-gallons or smaller

What not to take:

- ✗ Empty containers
- ✗ Medical wastes
- ✗ Explosives
- ✗ Radioactive wastes
- ✗ Compressed air cylinders except 5-gallons or smaller

Hours:

Daily

8 am to 4:45 pm

Located at the
Thurston County Waste
& Recovery Center on
Hogum Bay Road
(exit 111 off I-5).

ph: 867-2912