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News Release

*For Immediate Release*

### **Tips for Protecting Health, Safety During Floods**

Rain levels accumulated over the past few days have already caused flooding in some areas. As water levels reach such levels, the threat of flooding increases which could cause potential health and safety issues. If water enters your home or business, take precautions to avoid potential health and safety concerns during cleanup.

Avoid contact with flood water whenever possible. Flood water may contain contaminants and unseen hazards. If you must come in contact with flood water, wear rubber boots, rubber gloves and goggles during clean up. Immediately wash with soap and water after cleanup and wash all clothing worn during the cleanup in hot water and detergent. These clothes should be washed separately from uncontaminated clothes and linens.

Discard items that have come in contact with floodwater including:

- Large soft items that have been in contact with water for two or more days, such as couches, chairs, mattresses and carpet. Even though you cannot see it, mold is growing on these items. People who are sensitive to mold may experience nasal stuffiness, eye irritation, wheezing or skin irritation. People with severe allergies to mold or with chronic lung illness may experience more severe reactions, including fever, shortness of breath or mold infection in their lungs.
- Plastic items like kitchen utensils, plates, dishes, tupperware and baby bottle nipples.
- Kitchen utensils that are wooded or have cracks, such as wooden spoons and cutting boards.
- Leather or paper products.
- Garden produce.
- Medicines and cosmetics.

Other items may be successfully cleaned.

- Bedding and other soft items should be washed in hot water with bleach.
- Children's toys, utensils, dishware and small items with hard surfaces should be washed with soap and water and then disinfected by immersing for one minute in a solution of four tablespoons of bleach to two gallons of water.
- Pots and pans can be sterilized by boiling them for at least ten minutes.
- Items that a baby may put in his mouth should be boiled.
- Items that are too large to immerse, or surfaces like walls, decking and doors should be washed with soap and water and then wiped down with a solution of one cup of bleach to one gallon of water.

Be sure to protect yourself while cleaning up.

- Wear rubber gloves and rubber boots.
- Use eye protection and a mask while cleaning with bleach solutions.
- Be sure your home is well ventilated.
- Never mix bleach with ammonia or other cleaning solutions, as it may create toxic fumes.

Avoid electrical shock and damage to items by ensuring that any electrical appliances that have been in contact with floodwater are thoroughly cleaned, reconditioned and dry before operating them.

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