

Recovery from Hurricane Irene

8/31/11

Steps to take before returning home:

Physical Hazards

- Clear debris and physical hazards and wear protective footwear to prevent slips, trips and falls

Electrical

- Turn off or disconnect electrical service to water-damaged units to prevent electric shock from damaged wires
- Use a dry plastic- or rubber-insulated tool to reset breakers and use only one hand —do not touch a circuit breaker or replace a fuse with wet hands or while standing on a wet surface
- Contact a licensed electrician to inspect before flipping a switch or plugging in appliances until an electrician tells you it is safe —do not turn on damaged electrical appliances as electrical parts can pose an electric shock hazard or overheat and cause a fire
- Keep power cord connections dry
- Use portable ground-fault circuit-interrupter (GFCI) protective devices to help prevent electrocution and electrical shock injury
- Discard electrical devices that have been submerged, including: circuit breakers, fuses, Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCI), receptacles, plugs, switches
- Follow manufacturer's instructions when using a wet-dry vacuum cleaner or a pressure washer to avoid electric shock
- Never use portable generators indoors or outdoors near open doors, windows or vents because they emit carbon monoxide (CO), a poisonous gas that is colorless and odorless

Mold

- Remove and throw away all porous items that cannot be thoroughly cleaned and dried quickly within 24-48 hours, including:
 - carpeting and carpet padding
 - upholstery and wallpaper
 - drywall, floor and ceiling tiles, and insulation material
 - some clothing, leather, paper, wood, and food
- Wear personal protective equipment, including: an N-95 respirator (hardware stores usually sell them), goggles, gloves, long pants, long-sleeved shirt, and work boots/shoes
- Open doors and windows
- Use fans to dry out the building
- Store wet items outside the home until insurance claims can be filed
- Control entry of additional moisture by fixing leaks in roofs, walls, or plumbing
- *Prevent* mold growth, clean wet items and surfaces with detergent and water
- Remove mold from small areas with a solution of 1 cup of bleach in 1 gallon of water
 - Use a stiff brush on rough surface materials like concrete
 - Never mix bleach or products containing bleach with ammonia or products containing ammonia
 - Read the label on any product to see what it contains
 - Open windows and doors to provide fresh air

