



Staying Safe after a Flood

Take Precautions

- If you smell gas, leave the area. From a safe distance, first call 9-1-1 and then Texas Gas Service at 800-959-LEAK (5325).
- Use a flashlight. Do not use matches, cigarette lighters, or any other open flames, since gas may be present even if you do not smell it. Do not turn on the power.
- Look for signs of structural damage before entering your house. Do not enter if the building appears unsafe.
- Turn off the main circuit breaker if it can be done from a dry location. Never turn power on or off while standing in water. Keep power off until an electrician has inspected your system for safety.
- Be careful walking around. Look for nails, broken glass, snakes or other hazards. Floors may be slippery due to mud.
- If gas appliances have been extinguished, turn off the gas.
- If the house has been closed up for several days, enter briefly to open doors and windows and then wait outside for at least 30 minutes to allow the house to air out.
- Use bottled water that has not been exposed to floodwaters if available. You may need to boil water vigorously for five minutes. Check with 3-1-1 whether your water is safe to drink.
- Call 3-1-1 if you need assistance and to report flooding on private property.

Potential Dangers

- Gas leak
- Electrical shock
- Building collapse
- Sharp objects
- Slippery surfaces
- Wild animals
- Contaminated food and water

Hiring a Contractor

1. Call your insurance agent or check insurance company websites for a list of approved contractors.
2. Ask the contractor for references and call previous customers.
3. Get a written estimate that includes labor and materials along with start and finish dates.
4. Make sure the contractor has general liability insurance.
5. Insist on a written contract and get any guarantees made by the contractor in writing.
6. Don't pay for the entire job up front, pay by check or credit card (not cash) and make final payment only when the entire job is completed to your satisfaction.

from the Better Business Bureau

Cleaning up – contact your insurance company first

- Throw out food and medicines that may have come in contact with flood water, including food in refrigerators and freezers. Be aware that many commercial food containers are not water tight. Bacteria may be trapped in the labels of canned food.
- Thoroughly wash pots, pans, dishes, utensils and can openers with soap and hot water. Rinse, and then sanitize them by boiling them in clean water or immersing them for 15 minutes in a bleach disinfectant solution.
- Thoroughly wash all hard surfaces with soap and hot water. Rinse and sanitize. Allow them to air dry. Hard surfaces include flooring, molding, some furniture, countertops, appliances, sinks, etc.
- Wash or discard all items that came in contact with floodwater. Upholstered furniture, cushions, carpeting, mattresses, soft toys and pillows should be discarded.
- Look for signs of mold such as discoloration or a bad smell. People with asthmas, allergies, breathing conditions or immune suppression may be more sensitive to mold and mold infections. Contact your doctor with questions.
- Take photos of high water marks and damage to your property and possessions.
- Call 512-974-2550 to report chemical spills or for information about cleaning pools.

Safety Precautions

- Keep children and pets out of the affected area.
- Wear a face mask (N-95 is recommended), watertight boots, gloves and safety glasses. Use duct tape to seal the tops of gloves and boots to prevent water seepage.
- Clean and disinfect all clothing and boots after cleaning up.
- Shower and wash hands and hair thoroughly after cleaning up.
- First aid, even for minor cuts and burns, is important during flood cleanup. Immediately clean all wounds and cuts with soap and clean water. Consult your doctor afterwards.
- Cleanup workers should be up-to-date with their tetanus vaccination due to the risk of wounds during flood cleanup.

Safety Gear

- N-95 face mask
- Watertight boots with steel toe and insole
- Rubber gloves
- Safety glasses
- Hard hat
- Earplugs
- First aid kit
- Duct tape

Drying your house

- If it is safe to use electricity, use a “wet-dry” shop vacuum or a pump to remove water.
- A portable generator can be used to power equipment to remove standing water if electricity is not available. Never use gasoline-powered equipment or propane-powered dryers in enclosed areas such as a house or garage, as carbon monoxide poisoning can occur.
- Set dehumidifiers and fans to blow exhaust air outside to help drying.
- Have your heating, ventilating, and air conditioning systems professionally checked before turning them back on.

Before making repairs, contact 512-974-2843 for permitting requirements.