



Electric current passes easily through water. Water and electricity can cause severe injury through electrocution. Always turn off electricity when around water, especially when you need to walk or stand in puddles of standing water.

Many times seepage and flooding problems require the use of pumps, which are often powered by electricity. Be especially cautious when using these electric pumps.

Never use gasoline powered pumps or generators indoors. These machines create carbon monoxide fumes that can be deadly.

Wet or damp surfaces can be slippery, so you need to be careful when walking on basement floors that have had water on them.

If there were sewer backflows, the water will be polluted and contaminated. Take steps to protect yourself during cleanup by wearing protective clothing such as rubber gloves and boots.

After a flood, care must be taken to keep hydrostatic pressure (the weight of water pressing against a surface) from collapsing walls or buckling floors. Basements that fill with water during a flood event need to be pumped dry slowly and carefully, even though there will be a strong urge to pump the water out quickly. The basic concept is that water in your basement pushes out against your walls and floor at an equal pressure that water outside of your basement (surface water and groundwater) is pushing in. The correct way to remove water from your basement is to pump the water out of the basement at a rate similar to rate the water level is dropping outside of the basement. The following procedure should be followed:

Once the flood waters are no longer on the surface outside, pump the water in the basement down 1 foot, mark the level, and wait overnight. Check the water level the next day and if the water is at or above your mark the water level outside has not dropped enough to continue pumping. Wait 24 hours and repeat the above process. Once the water stops rising to your mark,

then pump the water level down 2-3 feet. Repeat the same overnight check procedures. Never reduce the water level by more than 1 foot per day. Repeat the process until all the water is removed.

Other precautions and preparations should also be taken in disaster situations such as flooding. Several preparation checklists and precautions can be obtained from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and also the American Red Cross. Additional information is available on their web sites at www.fema.gov and www.redcross.org.

