



SafetyAlert

We're Serious About Safety

Flood Hazards

Cleanup work of any kind is hazardous, but flood conditions make it even more so. Employers may naturally ask their employees to assist in cleaning up as the water recedes. Though willing, employers and employees may not be prepared for or properly trained to work safely in flooded environments. The Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSH Act) requires employers to comply with hazard-specific safety and health standards. In addition, pursuant to The General Duty Clause, Section 5(a)(1) of the OSH Act, employers must provide their employees with a workplace free from recognized hazards likely to cause death or serious physical harm. Emergency Preparedness Guides do not and cannot enlarge or diminish an employer's obligations under the OSH Act.

Hazards associated with working in flooded and recently flooded areas include:

- Electrical hazards
- Carbon monoxide
- Musculoskeletal hazards
- Thermal stresses
- Heavy equipment operation
- Structural instability
- Hazardous materials
- Fire
- Drowning
- Hypothermia due to the cold weather and water exposure
- Falls from heights
- Burns from fires caused by energized line contact or equipment failure
- Exhaustion from working extended shifts
- Dehydration
- Biohazards

Recognizing hazards and using the procedures and precautions in the state and federal resources listed below will help to keep you, your family and your employees safe and healthy while cleaning up after disasters that involve flooding.



Flood Hazard Resources for working in flooded and recently flooded areas:

RI DOH - HEALTH Issues Safety Reminders for First Responders During Flood Response Activities
<http://www.ri.gov/press/view.php?id=11072>

US EPA - most useful as a mold resource
<http://www.epa.gov/naturaldisasters/flooding.html>

OSHA - Flooding (describes worker hazards faced during floods and clean up - (see excerpt below)
<http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/emergencypreparedness/guides/floods.html>

OSHA – Flood Clean Up Alert 1 – How to Protect Yourself from Safety & Health Hazards During Flood Clean Up Operations
http://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data_FloodFacts/Bulletin1.pdf

OSHA – Flood Clean Up Alert 2 – How to Protect Yourself When Cleaning Up After a Flood
http://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data_FloodFacts/Bulletin2.pdf

OSHA – Flood Clean Up Alert 3 – How to Protect Yourself From Fungal Diseases
http://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data_FloodFacts/Bulletin3.pdf

OSHA – Flood Clean Up Alert 4 – How to Protect Yourself From Asbestos Hazards
http://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data_FloodFacts/Bulletin4.pdf

OSHA – Flood Clean Up Alert 5 – How to Protect Yourself From The Hazards of Lead Poisoning
http://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data_FloodFacts/Bulletin5.pdf

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