

SPLASH INTO EXTENSION

Flood Resources for Nebraska can be found at flood.unl.edu

The Flood's Over - Now What?

September 19, 2011
Fire Hall, 259 Spruce Ave, Niobrara, NE
6:30 p.m.
Register by Sept. 15, call 402-288-5611

Equipment for Entering & Cleaning Flood-Damaged Property

Folks waiting for flood waters to recede can start preparing to clean up homes and property by locating and organizing essential tools and equipment. Below is a list of items recommended specifically for entering and cleaning up flood damaged property.

While some items may have to be borrowed or purchased, many are necessary for people's safety. All items should be in good working condition and durable. If you aren't familiar with or haven't operated some equipment, read the manufacturer's instructions and safety warnings prior to use.

For personal protection from contaminants like pesticides,

bacteria, microorganisms, mold:

- First aid kit
- Goggles
- NIOSH 95 and or NIOSH 100 Air Filter Masks
- Half-face respirator rated for mold that use high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) cartridges
- Protective clothing – long-sleeved shirts, long pants, long rubber gloves, boots or shoes with hard, thick soles, waterproof over boots
- Drinking water

For inspecting the premises:

- Flashlights and fresh batteries
- A wooden stick for turning things over and scaring away snakes and small animals

For making temporary repairs; cleaning up mud and debris:

- Tools – Crowbar, hammer, saws, pliers, crescent wrench, screwdrivers, etc.
- Tarps
- Steel or aluminum scoop shovels
- Large heavy-duty garbage bags

For cleaning up and drying out the home:

- 6 or 9 mil plastic sheeting
- Duct tape, wooden strips for tacking sheeting
- Residential pressure washer
- Multiple buckets for cleaning, rinsing and disinfecting surfaces
- Cleaning mops, rags, bristle brushes
- Non-phosphate, all-purpose detergent like Borax
- Household disinfectants (look for words sodium hypochlorite (chlorine bleach), quaternary ammonium compound, phenolic-phenol, or pine-oil on labels)
- Clean, pure water
- Sand paper for cleaning wood studs
- New or never-been-used garden sprayer
- Fans
- Dehumidifiers
- Hygrometer or relative humidity gauge
- Moisture meter
- Padlocks, door locks and dead bolts

Additional equipment:

- Gas-powered generator
- Ground fault circuit interrupters for use with extension cords
- Heavy-duty extension cords
- HEPA-filtered vacuum for cleaning dry surfaces (optional)

For more information about entering and cleaning up a flood damaged home or property review UNL Extension NebGuide, G2108: Entering and Cleaning Up a Flood Damaged Home <http://www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/epublic/live/g2108/build/g2108.pdf>.

Free Legal Advice Available to Nebraska Flood Survivors

Nebraska flood survivors in the nine declared individual assistance counties adjacent to the Missouri River may request disaster-related advice from a lawyer using a toll-free legal aid line operated by Volunteer Lawyers of Nebraska through the Young Lawyers Division of the American Bar Association.

The number is 1-800-742-3005, which is staffed from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Callers may leave a message after hours and on weekends. The service is for legal issues arising from flooding during the period May 24 through August 1, in the counties of Boyd, Burt, Cass, Dakota, Dixon, Douglas, Knox, Sarpy and Washington.

Legal services available to qualifying individuals include:

- Assistance with insurance claims (life, medical, property, etc.)
- Counseling on landlord/tenant problems
- Assistance with home repair contracts
- Assisting in consumer protection issues
- Counseling on mortgage-foreclosure problems
- Replacement of wills and other legal documents destroyed in the major disaster
- Drafting of power of attorney
- Preparation of guardianship documents
- Referring individuals to local and state agencies that may provide further assistance.

There are some limitations on disaster legal services. Those will be explained on an individual basis when required.

After a Flood - Be Aware

As the waters recede from this summer's floods along the Missouri River, survivors need to be aware of scammers looking to fraudulently benefit from the disaster.

Survivors returning to their homes and other property may encounter people posing as inspectors, government officials or contractors. They may try to obtain personal information or collect payment for disaster assistance or repairs. Please keep in mind that FEMA employees **DO NOT** solicit or accept money for public services in disaster assistance and recovery. Many legitimate disaster assistance employees may visit your property now or once accessible -- like insurance agents, FEMA Community Relations teams, inspectors and contractors -- but here are some tips to remember to safeguard against fraud:

1. **Ask to see ID badges.** All FEMA employees and contractors will have a laminated photo ID. A FEMA shirt or jacket alone is not proof of identity.
2. **Safeguard personal information.** Be cautious when giving personal information such as Social Security or bank account numbers to anyone. FEMA generally will only request an applicant's Social Security or bank account numbers during the initial registration process. However FEMA inspectors may require verification of identity.
3. **Beware of people going door-to-door.** People knocking on doors at damaged homes or phoning homeowners claiming to be building contractors could be con artists, especially if they ask for personal information or solicit money.
4. **FEMA Community Relations teams** may be in your community distributing flyers mentioning that Social Security or bank account numbers are needed for the registration process, but they will not ask for this information.
5. **Federal workers do not solicit or accept money.** FEMA and U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) staff never charge applicants for disaster assistance, inspections or help to fill out applications. FEMA inspectors verify damages, but do not recommend or hire specific contractors to fix homes.

Always use **reliable, licensed contractors and ask for official credentials. If an encounter does seem unusual, do not hesitate to call** local law enforcement authorities or the FEMA Disaster Fraud Hotline at (866) 720-5721. Complaints can also be filed with the Nebraska Attorney General's Office Consumer Protection Division at (800) 727-6432.