

# Public Education



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WA State Emergency Management Division  
[www.emd.wa.gov](http://www.emd.wa.gov)

## Flood Safe...

Floods. We have seen the danger and damage floods cause throughout the United States. Mitigation is the first step toward minimizing the impact of a flood or any disaster. Mitigation is defined as the actions taken to eliminate or reduce long term risk to life, property, and the environment from natural and technological hazards (sometimes this may be referred to as prevention). More information can be found at: [http://www.emd.wa.gov/preparedness/prep\\_floodsafe.shtml](http://www.emd.wa.gov/preparedness/prep_floodsafe.shtml)



### How to Safely Pump Water Out of Your Basement:

- Never go into a flooded basement unless you know the electricity is off.
- For insurance purposes, take pictures of your basement before beginning any work.
- When the water is no longer covering the ground around the perimeter of your house, you can begin pumping the water from your basement.  
**CAUTION:** *Do not use gasoline-powered pumps or generators indoors as they produce deadly carbon monoxide exhaust fumes.*
- Pump the water level down 2 to 3 feet, mark the water level, and wait overnight.
- Check the water level the next day. If the water went back up and covered your mark, it is too early to drain your basement.
- Wait another 24 hours. Pump the water down 2 to 3 feet again, and check the water level the next day.
- When the water stops rising, pump the level down another 2 to 3 feet and wait overnight. Repeat the above steps until all the water is pumped out of the basement.

[More Details:](http://www.emd.wa.gov/preparedness/FloodSafe_HowTo.shtml) [http://www.emd.wa.gov/preparedness/FloodSafe\\_HowTo.shtml](http://www.emd.wa.gov/preparedness/FloodSafe_HowTo.shtml)

### To Ponder...

Action is the  
best antidote  
to worry

## Cleaning Up and Drying Out Your Home

If your house or its understructure have been under water from the recent flooding, you will need to take important steps to clean out bacteria and mold, and dry the building out thoroughly. Steps for drying out the house:



- Turn off the main power.
- Open up the house to allow moist air to escape.
- Remove all wet furniture, contents and carpets or rugs. If you decide to keep some of These items they must be cleaned and disinfected.
- Discard all contaminated food products.

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#### Interior Walls:

Interior plaster walls will need to be drained if they are still holding water. Remove the baseboard trim and drill holes about 2" above the floor to let the water out. The holes can be hidden behind the reinstalled baseboards. Flood soaked sections of wallboard will usually have to be removed and thrown away. Paneled walls can usually be dried out by prying out the bottom corner of the paneling and propping it out away from the wall studs.

#### Exterior Walls:

Insulation in exterior walls will hold moisture and bacteria. It is important to remove any flood soaked insulation as soon as possible so the other building materials can dry out properly. Batt insulation and blown-in insulation cannot be reused in your repairs and must be thrown away. Rigid foam insulation can be removed and disinfected. Once it is completely dry it can be reinstalled in the wall cavity. Once the insulation is removed the wall must be disinfected and thoroughly dried. Dehumidifiers and portable heaters can speed this process up.

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### Carbon Monoxide Danger – Safety Reminder:



You can't see or smell carbon monoxide, but at high levels it can kill a person in minutes. Carbon monoxide (CO) is produced whenever any fuel such as gas, oil, kerosene, wood, or charcoal is burned. If appliances that burn fuel are maintained and used properly, the amount of CO produced is usually not hazardous.

However, if appliances are not working properly or are used incorrectly, dangerous levels of CO can result. Hundreds of people die accidentally every year from CO poisoning caused by malfunctioning or improperly used fuel-burning appliances.

#### Symptoms of CO poisoning:

Severe headaches, dizziness, mental confusion, nausea, fainting.

#### Actions to take:

Get fresh air immediately.

Go to the emergency room and tell the doctor you suspect CO poisoning.

[More Details:](http://www.emd.wa.gov/preparedness/CarbonMonoxideDanger.shtml) <http://www.emd.wa.gov/preparedness/CarbonMonoxideDanger.shtml>

Questions or comments? E-mail us at [PublicEducation@emd.wa.gov](mailto:PublicEducation@emd.wa.gov)