

## Floodwatch Tips

### Information for Personal Service Establishments

The best way to minimize flood damage is to take precautions ahead of time, especially if your business is located in a flood-prone area. It is important to remember that floodwaters are very dirty and items in contact with floodwaters should be handled properly. Flooding may result in the loss of power, loss of a safe water supply and cause sewer back-ups.

Operators need to develop an emergency response plan to anticipate problems and possible solutions to help protect their facility, and reduce damage to their equipment, inventory and operation. This contingency planning will help operators speed up their recovery after the flood.

***"Personal Service Establishments that have been impacted by the effects of flooding cannot operate until inspected by an Environmental Health Officer"***

#### ➤ **Preparing for a flood**

Reduce inventory of supplies to minimal levels in order to reduce losses. Also, consider moving your inventory, operational records and documents to a secure off-site location.

##### ▪ **Equipment and supplies**

Move as much of your inventory as possible to a secure area above the anticipated flood:

- All chemicals cleaning agents, pigments, dyes, lotions, powder cosmetics and supplies used in the operation.
- Furniture, beds, tables, chairs, carpets and furnishings that are porous.
- Electrical equipment, such as tanning beds, computers, cash registers, autoclaves and disinfection equipment.
- Instruments, tools and any other portable equipment, items or supplies.

#### **What to do with your utilities?**

- Take special precautions to safeguard electrical, natural gas or propane heating equipment. If there is time, consult with your supplier for instructions.
- Turn off the furnace, the outside natural gas valve and the electricity. Know how to do this properly and safely. Call FortisBC, BC Hydro or an electrician if you need help.

### ➤ After the flood

#### Before re-entering your personal service establishment:

- Return only when notified by the local emergency operations center.
- Check your building for structural safety before entering.
- Call your municipal engineering or building department for an inspection before re-entering or follow directions from the local emergency operations center.
- Call BC Hydro or have an electrician inspect and check for electrical hazards before you re-enter your facility, especially if the electricity was not shut off before evacuation.
- If you smell gas or suspect a leak, leave immediately. Call FortisBC or the local Fire Department. Do not re-enter until you are told it is safe to do so.
- If your premises receives well water or uses an on-site sewage disposal system, please refer to "*Private Drinking Water Supplies: What to Do After a Flood*", "*Disinfection of a Well After Flooding*", and "*Flood Information Regarding On-Site Sewage Disposal Systems*" from Fraser Health.

#### Re-entering your facility:

- Avoid wading in standing water as it may contain unseen hazards.
- Do not turn on the main gas valve. The main gas valve must be turned on by a licensed gas service technician.
- Do not use flooded appliances (gas/electric), electrical outlets, switch boxes or fuse-breaker panels until your local utility or other qualified personnel have checked them.
- Do not use wood, gas or electrical heating systems until they have been thoroughly inspected by a qualified technician.
- Do not use any equipment used in the operation unless directed by the manufacturer, or a qualified service technician that it can be cleaned and sanitized and put back into operation.

#### To minimize potential injury you should consider the following:

- Do not turn on the main gas valve until instructed to do so by FortisBC or a licensed gas service technician.

## ➤ **Cleaning and sanitizing your establishment and equipment**

The basic steps to cleaning up after a flood are: remove standing water, remove mud, tear out any walls if needed, clean up and disinfect. The physical structure should be dried quickly in order to minimize the growth of bacteria and mould. You should not clean your premises until you have a safe supply of water and a functioning waste disposal system.

### ***"Consider hiring a professional restoration company"***

- Wear personal protective equipment such as a face mask, gloves and rubber boots.
- Remove all water, mud and other debris.
- Break out walls and remove drywall, wood panelling and insulation at least 50 cm (20 inches) above the high water line.
- Before cleaning floors, remove and discard flood-soaked carpets and underlay.
- Wash all walls, floors, windows and ceilings using soap and potable water.
- Rinse surfaces with potable water and then sanitize all walls, floors, windows, ceilings and surfaces using a sanitizing solution.
- Sanitize using a chlorine solution. Mix by adding 1 litre (4 cups) of household bleach to 25 litres (5 gallons) of water or use a commercial sanitizer. (HealthLink BC File Clean-Up After a Flood, December 2011 available at <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/services-and-resources/healthlinkbc-files>.)
- Thoroughly wash and sanitize all interior surfaces and appliances.
- Increase ventilation and decrease humidity by opening windows and doors.
- Sterilize all critical items.
- Disinfect non-critical and semi-critical items.
- Sanitize all surfaces, tables, workstations, counter tops and storage shelves.
- Follow the methods of sterilization and disinfection identified in the *Guidelines for Personal Service Establishments* at <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/keeping-bc-healthy-safe/pse/pse-guidelines.pdf>

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## ➤ What to discard

- All single-use items contaminated with floodwater e.g. disposable sharps, tongue depressors, swabs, paper products and wipes.
- Pigments and dyes.
- Creams and lotions.
- Moveable items should be taken outside and be assessed for salvage; porous items that have been soaked with flood waters cannot be effectively cleaned or sanitized and should be discarded. These include:
  - Gyproc and insulation
  - Carpeting and underlay
  - Mattresses and box springs
  - Pillows (feather or synthetic)
  - Less expensive articles including particle board furniture, paper and books
  - Upholstered chairs and benches, including coverings, padding and cushions

To contact the local Environmental Health Office by phone,  
please call

Population Public Health Central Call Centre at:

**604-587-3936**

and request to be connected to your local area office.

**Fraser Health:** [www.fraserhealth.ca/healthprotection](http://www.fraserhealth.ca/healthprotection)