

Floodwatch Tips

Information for swimming pools and hot tubs

The best way to minimize flood damage is to take precautions ahead of time, especially if your swimming pool or hot tub 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 swimming pools and hot tubs, and reduce damage to their equipment, inventory and operation. This contingency planning will help operators speed up their recovery after the flood.

"Permitted Swimming Pool and Hot Tub facilities 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.

▪ **Equipment and supplies**

Move as much of your inventory as possible to a secure area above the anticipated flood level or to an offsite location:

- Disinfection chemicals, gas chlorine tanks, acids, agents, and supplies used in the operation (chemicals must be kept dry and not mix together due to risk of explosion).
- Filter media.
- Furniture, tables, chairs, carpets and furnishings that are porous.
- Electrical equipment, computers, televisions, and tools.
- Fitness equipment.
- Play equipment, life jackets, flotation mats and boards.
- Any other portable equipment or items.

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 swimming pool or hot tub building:

- 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 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 and ceilings 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 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.
- Thoroughly clean and sanitize all equipment surfaces such as:
 - Pool decks, change rooms and shower surfaces
 - Weights, fitness equipment and mats
 - Tables, workstations and countertops
- Moveable items should be taken outside and be assessed for salvage. Porous items that have been soaked with floodwaters cannot be effectively cleaned and sanitized and should be discarded.

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➤ **Cleaning and disinfecting hot tubs and whirl pools basin**

- Drain the water.
- Disinfect the basin as per procedure following a diarrheal fecal accident unless there is evidence to show that this level of disinfection is not required.
- Backwash filter to waste.
- Refill hot tub and balance pool water chemistry.

➤ **Cleaning and disinfecting swimming pools basin**

- Remove debris and vacuum pool basin.
- Disinfect the pool as per procedure following a diarrheal fecal accident unless there is evidence to show that this level of disinfection is not required.
- Backwash filter to waste.
- Balance pool water chemistry.

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