NATURAL AND CATASTROPHIC DISASTER RE-ENTRY FACTS

May 3, 2016

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

When local leaders and officials determine the safety of citizens returning to their community, the decisions they make are based on several factors. These may include: road conditions (road closures), public safety, availability of electricity (downed power lines), clean drinking water (broken water/sewer lines), broken gas connections, etc. During this process, lingering hazards could cause delays for those returning home after a natural or catastrophic disaster.

Once officials in your area have declared it safe for you to return to your home, there are many things you should consider when reentering your community and start the clean-up process. Please use the content in the following pages to assist you before, during and after an emergency or disaster.

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RETURNING HOME

Before Returning Home:

- Find out if it is safe to enter your community or neighborhood. Follow the advice of your local authorities.
- Bring supplies such as flashlights, batteries, bottled water and non-perishable foods in case utilities are out.
- Create back-up communication plans with family and friends in case you are unable to call from affected areas.
- Plan fo delays when traveling. Bring extra food, water, bedding, and other items that will make the trip more comfortable. Keep the fuel tank of your vehicle as full as possible in the case gas stations are crowded, out fuel or closed.
- Carry a map to help you route around heavy traffic or impassable roads.
- Find out if local medical facilities are open and if emergency services are functioning again. Do NOT call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number to do this.
- Road beds may have been scoured or even washed away during flooding creating unsafe driving conditions, remain aware of road conditions.
- Fish kills are naturally occurring and not expected during a flood except in stagnant back water areas when the water is receding or when there is a change in salinity. Call DEQ at 1-888-763-5424 or 225-219-3640 to report fish kills.

First Inspection:

- If possible, leave children and pets with a relative. If not, keep them away from hazards and floodwater.
- Beware of rodents, snakes, insects and other animals that may be on your property or in your home.
- Before entering your home, look outside for damaged power lines, gas lines, foundation cracks and other exterior damage. It may be too dangerous to enter the home.
- Smell for gas. Natural gas and other fuel lines may be broken, highly explosive vapors may still be present (methane and other explosives gases may accumulate from decaying materials). If you smell gas and other fuel or hear a hissing noise, leave immediately and contact the fire department.
- If your home was flooded, assume it is contaminated with mold. Mold increases health risks for those with asthma, allergies or other breathing conditions.
- Open doors and windows. Let the house air out before staying inside for any length of time or if the house was closed for more than 48 hours.
- Turn the main electrical power and water systems off until you or a professional can ensure that they are safe. NEVER turn the power on or off, or use an electrical tool or appliance while standing in water.
- Check the ceiling and floor for signs of sagging. Water may be trapped in the ceiling or floors may be unsafe to walk on.

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ITEMS TO TAKE WHEN RETURNING HOME

(CHECKLIST):

- ☐ Bottled water and non-perishable foods
- ☐ Cameras For photos of damage for insurance claims
- ☐ Cell phone charged, bring charger
- ☐ Cleanser/hand cleaning gel for personal use
- ☐ First aid kit
- ☐ Flashlight, portable radio and extra batteries
- ☐ Fuel/gas
- ☐ Government issued ID and proof of address
- ☐ Hygiene products and toilet paper
- ☐ Insect repellent and sunscreen
- ☐ Long sleeved shirts, long pants, sturdy waterproof boots and work gloves
- ☐ Medication
- ☐ Pets, Pet food
- ☐ Phone #s (important #s), written
- ☐ Road maps

Go to gohsep.la.gov, Emergency Guide for a detailed Emergency Supply Checklist.

USEFUL Mobile APPS:

ALERT FM

SEE SOMETHING SEND SOMETHING

GET A GAME PLAN

GET A BUSINESS PLAN

FEMA

HealthVault

211 Get Connected. Get Answers.

Cleaning Your Home

- Wear sturdy clothing, including rubber gloves and rubber boots.
- Avoid broken glass and other sharp objects. Wear leather or sturdy gloves when handling outdoor objects.
- Be careful when moving furnishings or debris since they may be water logged and heavier.
- Throw out all food, beverages and medicine exposed to flood waters and mud, including canned goods and containers with food or liquid that has been sealed shut. When in doubt, throw it out.
- **Some cleaning solutions can cause toxic fumes** and other hazards if mixed together. If you smell a strong odor or your eyes water from the fumes or mixed chemicals, open a window and get out of your home.
- Don't remove unlabeled containers or containers that may contain hazardous material. Call DEQ at 1-888-763-5424 or 225-219-3640 to report environmental concerns.
- Throw out items that absorb water and cannot be cleaned or disinfected (e.g. mattresses, carpeting, cosmetics, stuffed animals and baby toys).
- Remove all drywall and insulation that has been in contact with flood waters.
- Clean hard surfaces (e.g. flooring, countertops and appliances) thoroughly with hot water and soap or a detergent.

USING GENERATORS SAFELY

When using a portable generator, connect equipment you want to power directly to the outlets on the generator. Do not connect a portable generator to a home's electrical system. Operate the generator in the manner it was designed by the manufacturer.

If you are considering getting a generator, get advice from a professional, such as an electrician. Make sure that the generator that you purchase is rated for the power that you think you will need.

Caution: Carbon Monoxide Kills ⚠

Never use a generator, grill, camp stove or other gasoline, propane, natural gas or charcoal-burning devices inside a home, garage, basement, crawlspace, or any partially enclosed area. Locate unit away from doors, windows and vents that could allow carbon monoxide to come indoors.

The primary hazards **to avoid** when using alternate sources for electricity, heating or cooking are carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning, electric shock and fire.

If you start to feel sick, dizzy or weak while using a generator, you must get to fresh air right away. Death or full incapacitation can result quickly from CO poisoning.

Do not store cans of fuel, flammable liquids or gasses indoors, or next to ignition sources such as operating gas water heaters and stoves.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROPERTY CONTAMINATED WITH OIL RESIDUES

Avoid bare skin contact with visible oil contamination.

Avoid areas on your property where the sediment/soil has visible oil contamination.

Avoid areas where petroleum odors are present.

Do not allow pets to come into contact with oil contamination.

If the presence of oil contamination has been verified, homes should not be reoccupied until the potential health hazards have been assessed and remediated where it is deemed to be necessary.

Concerned citizens can call Single Point of Contact (SPOC) at 225-219-3640 or toll free 1-888-763-5424., to report oil or other pollution for assessment. Citizens may also report an incident online by completing an incident reporting form at www.deq.louisiana.gov/apps/forms/irf/forms .

ADDITIONAL SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

Be sure that before using any electrical appliance, they are properly grounded, and where possible, connected to a ground break equipped electrical source, (GFI circuit).

Don't smoke, light matches, operate electrical switches, use either cell or conventional telephones, or create any other source of ignition.

Use fans both during and after the use of disinfecting, cleaning, and sanitizing products.

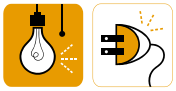
Do not overload circuits or extension cords causing an electrical fire.

Keep all household products locked, out of reach of children. Use child-resistant packaging properly by closing the container securely after each use. Keep items in original containers. Call 1-(800) 222-1222 (Louisiana Poison Control Center, LA only) immediately in case of poisoning.

Have a safety device readily available for emergencies such as an A-B-C fire extinguisher.

Floodwaters could contain high levels of bacteria. Don't drink or play in the floodwater.

Be sure all cuts, scrapes or wounds are covered so to further reduce the chances of becoming infected by floodwater.



CURBSIDE SEGREGATION OF DEBRIS

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Sorted by the resident into piles in these categories for collection as a result of a disaster.

For more information, refer to the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality Comprehensive Plan for Disaster Clean-up and Debris Management: http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/tabid/2853/Default.aspx

PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW WHEN ACCUMULATING AND DISPOSING OF DEBRIS AND WASTE

- **Electronic Debris** – devices or components that contain one or more circuit boards and are used primary for data transfer or storage, communication, or entertainment purposes, including but not limited to, desktop and laptop computer, computer peripherals, monitors, copying machines, scanners, printers, radios, televisions, camcorders video cassette recorders (VCRs), compact disc players, digital video disc player, MP3 players, telephones, including cellular and portable telephones, and stereos.
- **Emergency C and D Debris** – construction and demolition debris: generally considered not water soluble including but not limited to, metal, concrete, brick, asphalt, roofing materials (shingles, sheet rock, plaster) or lumber from a construction, remodeling repair renovation, or demolition project that is authorized by the government to be necessary for a disaster.
- **Household hazardous waste (HHW)** – waste that can catch fire, react, explode, is corrosive or toxic that is generated by individuals on the premises of a residence for individuals (**a household**) and composed primarily of materials found in the wastes generated from homes. Wastes generated by commercial/industrial establishments that appear to be the same as household waste **are not** considered household hazardous waste and must follow state/federal hazardous waste regulations.
- **Metals** – (or scrap metals) bits and pieces of metal parts (e.g., bars, turnings, rods, sheets, wire or metal pieces that may be combined together with bolts or soldering (e.g., radiators, scrap automobiles, railroad box cars), which when worn or superfluous can be recycled.
- **Vegetative Debris** – vegetative matter resulting from landscaping, maintenance, right-of-way or land-clearing operations, including trees and shrubbery, leaves and limbs, stumps, grass clippings, flowers.
- **White goods** – discarded domestic appliances including, but not limited to, refrigerators, ranges, washers, freezers, dryers, air conditioning and heating units, freestanding ice makers, built-in stove surface units and oven units, and water heaters. White goods do not include small household appliances, such as, stand mixers, toasters, blenders, etc.
- **Woodwaste** – wood residue, cutoffs, wood chips, sawdust, wood shaving, bark, wood refuse, wood-fired boiler ash, wood ash, and plywood or other bonded materials that contain only polyurethane, phenolic-based glues, or other glues that are approved specifically by the administrative authority. Uncontaminated, un-treated, or un-painted lumber/wooden pallets are considered woodwaste.

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EMERGENCY LINKS

American Red Cross Hurricane Preparedness: http://www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster/hurricane
EPA, Natural Disasters/Hurricanes: http://www.epa.gov/naturalevents/hurricanes/index.html
FEMA, Ready Campaign/Louisiana (Hurricane/Flood information): http://www.ready.gov/louisiana
Governor's Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Preparedness/Get a Game Plan: http://www.getagameplan.org/index.htm
Governor's Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Preparedness/State EOC: http://gohsep.la.gov/RESPOND/STATE-EOC#
Louisiana Department of Transportation/Road Reports and Weather Warnings: http://hb.511la.org/#roadReports/layers= allReports,roadReports,weatherWarnings,ferryReports
Louisiana State Police/Road Closures: http://www.lsp.org/roadclosure.html
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA): http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

FOR EMERGENCIES, call 911 in all areas. FOR NON-EMERGENCY INFORMATION AND REFERRALS, CALL 211.

Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness
225-925-7500

National Weather Service Forecast Office
(New Orleans/Baton Rouge) – 504-522-7330 (Lake Charles) – 337-477-5285

Louisiana State Police
225-925-6325 or * LSP from any cell phone

Louisiana Attorney General Hurricane Hotline
1-800-351-4889

American Red Cross
1-866-GET- INFO (1-866-438-4636)

Entergy
1-800-ENTERGY (1-800-368-3749) Power Outages: 1-800-9OUTAGE (1-800-968-8243)

Demco
1-800-262-1160

Our Mission

DEQ strives to provide service to the people of Louisiana through comprehensive environmental protection in order to promote and protect health, safety and welfare while considering sound policies regarding employment and economic development.

Visit us at http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/
for all of your environmental needs.

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