

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**FLOODING HEALTH AND SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS**

With the recent heavy rains and local flooding, the Juneau County Health Department says it is very important to remember some basic safety precautions.

**WATER SAFETY**

- When in doubt, if any water supply is cloudy, odorous, colored -- do not drink the water.
- Do not use water from a private well that has been or is flooded. If you are not certain about the safety of your water supply, you should have the well tested for bacteria.
- Drink bottled water or water from a known, safe, source.
- Listen for public announcements on the safety of the municipal water supply and follow their instructions.
- Do not swim in rivers, streams, creeks, or lakes in flooded areas.

**SEWER/WASTEWATER CONCERNS**

- Private septic systems that have been flooded are no longer reliable.
- Sewage may back flow from your septic or municipal system through floor drains, toilets, etc. Any affected areas, such as basements, must be cleaned and disinfected with a chlorine solution. Anything that cannot be cleaned should be thrown out.
- If you have raw sewage or sewage contaminated water in your basement, wear protective boots and gloves when entering the area. Ensure that no electrical hazards exist before entering flooded or water damaged areas. Contact your electrical utility immediately if you have questions or concerns regarding electrical hazards.

**FUTURE CONCERNS - MOLD**

- A major health concern after flooding or other water damage in homes is the growth of molds, bacteria, and other biological contaminants. This is often associated with a musty mildew odor, as well as visible evidence of mold growth on walls, floors, carpeting, or other water-damaged items. Some persons may be allergic to or develop allergies or asthma-like symptoms from exposure to these contaminants.

- It is important that items in a home contributing to mold and bacterial growth be cleaned and dried as soon as possible. If this is not possible, items should be discarded.
- Seek assistance from professionals regarding heating and ventilation systems and ways to properly clean for mold contamination.

### **CORRECTING WATER DAMAGE AND CLEANING UP**

- Wear protective boots and gloves when cleaning flood-damaged areas.
- Seal all leaks (ceilings, walls, foundations) and correct improper surface drainage. Reduce moisture generation in crawl spaces by ventilation.
- Wash surfaces and floors, first with a detergent, and then to disinfect them, with household chlorine bleach solution. Use four to six ounces of bleach per gallon of water. The bleach solution should stay in contact with the affected surface for several minutes before rinsing off with clean water. It may be necessary to repeat this process several times for items that were grossly contaminated.
- When using a bleach solution, open windows to provide good ventilation.
- Only individuals who are necessary for clean up should be in the affected areas. Persons with respiratory health problems (e.g. asthma, emphysema) should NOT perform the clean up. Children and pets should not be allowed in these areas.

For more detailed information on clean up and flood safety, refer to the Wisconsin Department of Health at <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/flood> or contact the Juneau County Health Department at (608) 847-9373.