



## Cleaning up after a flood during COVID-19

[Michigan.gov/Coronavirus](https://Michigan.gov/Coronavirus)

Following the failure of the Sanford and Edenville dams in Mid-Michigan, you may have experienced flooding in your home. Now that the water is receding, there will be necessary cleanup of the flood damage. While performing this cleanup, you will need to protect yourself not only from bacteria and mold the flood waters leave behind, but also from COVID-19. Here is what you need to know about cleaning up after a flood during COVID-19.

### **COVID-19 and Water Spread**

Although transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19 through sewage may be possible, there is no evidence to date that this has occurred. It is not known whether this virus can cause disease if a person is exposed to untreated wastewater or sewage. At this time, the risk of transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19 through properly designed and maintained sewage systems is thought to be low.

### **How to protect yourself while cleaning up after a flood and from COVID-19 exposure**

- Hard hats
- Goggles or face shield
- Liquid-repellent coveralls or long-sleeved impervious gown
- Rubber gloves
- Waterproof boots with steel toe and insole (not just steel shank)
- Earplugs or protective headphones (if you're working with noisy equipment)
- N95 masks (or a respirator with a higher protection level) may be recommended in certain situations. Workers must comply with OSHA's Respiratory Protection standard (29 CFR 1910.134, Appendix D).

Make sure to take rest breaks often as wearing protective gear can be tiring. Remember to always wear protective gear when cleaning up flood damage.

If you have any open cuts or sores protect them from exposure to floodwater and keep them as clean as possible by washing them with soap and water for 20 seconds and applying an antibiotic ointment to discourage infection.

While skin contact with floodwater doesn't pose a serious health risk by itself, eating or drinking anything contaminated with floodwater can cause diseases. Remember to discard any food or

drink that has come into contact with floodwater and always wash hands before preparing food, eating or drinking.

## **How to and protect yourself from carbon monoxide poisoning during flood clean up**

To prevent carbon monoxide poisoning, do not use fuel-powered tools or generators in enclosed spaces where levels of gas can build up – such as in tented-off areas or houses.

Pay attention to symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning, such as:

- Headache
- Dizziness
- Confusion
- Fatigue
- Feeling sick to your stomach

## **For more information**

For more information on flood cleanup and carbon monoxide poisoning:

- [Centers for Disease Control Clean Up Safety After a Flood](#)
- [Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Mold Website](#)
- [Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Carbon Monoxide Website](#)
- [Environmental Protection Agency Sewage and Wastewater](#)