



STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES  
Bureau for Public Health  
Commissioner's Office

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**IMPORTANT SEPTEMBER 2018 HURRICANE FLORENCE STORM INFORMATION**

TO: Local Health Departments  
FROM: Rahul Gupta, MD, MPH, MBA, FACP *RJG*  
Commissioner and State Health Officer  
DATE: September 14, 2018  
RE: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Public Health is informing all local health departments (LHDs) of the impending weather and potential for significant rainfall, flooding and power outages.

**Precautions Urged During Flood Clean Up**

West Virginians, in planning for remnants of Hurricane Florence, are urged to use precautions both during and after the storm. Threats from clean-up can produce long-term effects of illness and injury, due to dangerous bacteria often living during and after a flood. These disease-producing bacteria can remain alive and dangerous for long periods of time on items covered or exposed to flood water or sewage.

Residents are advised to keep their tetanus immunizations current. Those involved in doing clean-up or repairs after flooding should wear gloves and avoid exposure to any broken skin or wounds.

There are additional threats looming throughout clean-up efforts. The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Public Health recommends the following:

After the flood waters have receded:

- Before beginning any clean-up, make sure electricity and gas valves are turned off.
- Follow the instructions of the utility companies relative to restoration of gas and electrical services.
- Before entering any house or building that has been flooded, check for foundation cracks or shifting of the foundation.
- Drain or pump water out of flooded basements. (Don't pump out basements too soon after flood water has receded as the water-soaked ground could cause the collapse of basement walls.)
- Hose down all floors, walls and ceilings with clean water. This should be done before the surfaces dry, if possible.
- Scrub all surfaces using soap or detergent and clean hot water.

- Disinfect surfaces with a solution of bleach and clean water (four (4) tablespoons of bleach per one (1) gallon of water).

To protect your health while doing flood clean-up

- While working, keep hands away from mouth and face.
- Disinfect all wounds and dress them immediately.
- Wear protective clothing (rubber boots, rubber gloves and eye protection).
- Wash hands often using clean water and soap.
- Discard items that cannot be cleaned and dried.
- Get a tetanus shot if you have not had a booster.

Questions about flood clean-up may be directed to the LHD or the Bureau for Public Health.