

Useful information for Dealing with the Aftermath of Sandy

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Recommended Vaccines

The department of Health Services is offering tetanus and flu immunizations to first responders, volunteers and personnel involved in storm clean-up activities and residents affected by Tropical Storm Sandy. To find out where to receive your immunization, click on the [Suffolk County Update](#) or call 854-0333 for more information on recommended immunizations:

Residential Oil Spills and Flooding

If your home has been affected by a flood that caused an oil spill or any type of petroleum release in or near your home, you should contact the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) Spill Hotline immediately at **1-800-457-7362** to report the spill. Oil spills usually cause strong odors and can contaminate indoor air. You should not stay in a building with strong oil odors, since inhaling oil vapors may cause health effects. If oil is mixed with the water that has flooded your home DO NOT pump the oily water out into your yard. The NYSDEC can assist you with having oily water pumped out of your home. The following guidance is provided from the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) on what to do if the interior of your home is affected by petroleum.

- There is some practical information on [the NYSDOH website about oil spill/flooding clean-up](#).
- Homeowners and property owners should file claims with their insurance companies, while tenants should request assistance from their landlord.

- Claims should be filed with FEMA and the SBA (for businesses) as well as insurance companies, as soon as possible.
- Keep receipts, and document damage and clean-up efforts with pictures and journals as needed.
- Take advantage of shelters/friends/families etc. Keep receipts if you are forced to stay at a hotel.

If you have followed the guidance above and still have questions, you can contact the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) at **518-402-7810** or the toll-free number at **1-800-458-1158**. After 5 PM and weekends, call **1-866-881-2809**.

Avoid Getting Sick from Floodwaters

Residents who are moving back into homes affected by floodwaters are advised to take precautions to avoid getting sick. The link below offers the following recommendations:

- handling sewage contamination in or around the home
- removing sludge from yard
- cleaning homes and belongings
- using disinfecting solutions or cleaners
- cleaning yards and children's play areas

[How to Avoid Getting Sick from Floodwaters](#) brochure from NYSDOH

Drinking Water Concerns

The Suffolk County Department of Health Services (SCDHS) has collected and analyzed approximately 136 samples from various public water supply systems throughout Suffolk County to ensure the bacteriological quality of the county's drinking water. All major public water supply systems, serving a population of approximately 1,364,000 on the mainland of Suffolk County, have not reported any service disruptions and the water has been safe for potable use throughout the duration of the storm and its aftermath.

Immediately following the storm, water supplied by 29 small water supply systems was deemed not safe for consumption due to potential water service disruption that increases risk from contaminants such as bacteria. Residents served by these systems, most of them on Fire Island, were advised to avoid using tap water directly for potable purposes until further notice. In the interim, recommended alternatives included certified bottled water or, where possible, bringing water to a rolling boil for at least one

minute. To date, most of the boil water advisories have been lifted. SCDHS is in the process of collecting water samples from the remaining communities and if the results are acceptable the postings for these communities can be lifted this week. For additional information, residents should contact their water suppliers or SCDHS at (631) 854-0093.

Homes Served by Private On-Site Wells

Approximately 50,000 residences in Suffolk County are served by private on-site wells. Residents with wellheads that have been affected by floodwater are also advised not to use their wells for any purpose, and instead to use bottled water or an acceptable alternative water source until they have their well tested by a commercial certified laboratory. These residents are also advised to have their wells disinfected prior to testing.

New York State Department of Health website lists the following Commercial Laboratories as certified to perform drinking water analyses for private well samples. Each laboratory may be certified in one or more categories of accreditation:

- American Analytical Laboratories LLC, Farmingdale – 631-454-6100
- Enviroscience Consultants, Inc., Ronkonkoma -- 631-580-3191
- H2M Labs Inc., Melville – 631-694-3040
- Long Island Analytical Laboratories, Inc., Holbrook – 631-472-3400

[For more information on what kind of testing is recommended, refer to this document.](#)

Re-entering Your Home

If you were ordered to evacuate your home, you must check with the mayor's office, town supervisor or local codes enforcement official before returning to your home. Even if you evacuated voluntarily, you should call the town clerk or the building department to ask about the status of buildings in your area and if there are any requirements before re-entry. [Additional tips can be found on this document.](#)

Health Problems Associated with Mold

Exposure to mold can cause health effects in some people. The most common effects are allergic responses from breathing mold spores. Allergic responses include hay fever, asthma, and irritation of the eyes, nose, throat or lungs. Less common effects of mold exposure include infections and toxic effects. Serious infections from living molds are relatively rare and occur mainly in persons with severely suppressed immune systems. Common symptoms of mold exposure are: nasal and sinus congestion, eye irritation,

respiratory problems, cough, throat irritation, skin irritation-such as rash and headache.

For assistance in ridding your home or office of mold, the following resources are available to you:

- The Center for Environmental Health, Bureau of Toxic Substance Assessment – (518) 402-7800
- The [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency website](#). This site has a large listing of resources on the subject of mold.
- The [New York State Department of Health](#) under “Information on preparing and recovery from a storm.”

Marine & Beach Debris Safety Precautions and Guidelines

Cleaning up beaches or inland water areas, particularly after a major storm such as Hurricane Sandy, involves certain inherent risks. Some of these risks include, but are not limited to: possible injury, over-exertion, sun exposure, dangerous terrain, infection as a result of contact with needles, condoms, sharp metal objects, exposure to wild animals, sewage or hazardous chemicals. If you choose to clean up marine debris, [please refer to these guidelines for safety precautions](#). A summary of contact information is as follows:

- **DO NOT** pick up dead animals or attempt to move an injured animal – call the Riverhead Foundation **24-Hour Stranding Hotline: 631-369-9829**
Or the Suffolk County Animal Control Services: Dog or Cat Issues Call: **631-382-7722** Wildlife Issues Call: **631-736-3050**
- **DO NOT** pick up syringes, needles, any biohazard waste, condoms, tampons, waste materials, or anything that looks like it comes from a hospital. Please note the location and notify the Suffolk County Department of Health Services (SCDHS) at 631-852-5760 if any such items are observed.
- **DO NOT** pick up any weapons. Notify Suffolk County Police at 631-852-COPS.
- **DO NOT** touch or attempt to move hazardous materials such as oil, gasoline, drums, fuel tanks and containers, gas cans, gas cylinders, chemical storage totes, residential pesticides, herbicides and insecticides, etc. If observed, immediately notify the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) Spill Hotline at 1-800-457-7362.
- **DO NOT** attempt to move or remove derelict/adrift boats or other large heavy debris such as shipping containers, docks, pilings or sheathing unless the proper heavy equipment is utilized. If observed, notify the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) at 631-444-0350.

If the debris item is a potential hazard to navigation, immediately radio your nearest US Coast Guard Sector Command Center via VHF-FM Ch. 16, **dial 911, or phone the nearest Coast Guard unit.**

Avoiding Carbon Monoxide Dangers and Home Heating Fires

Sandy has caused power outages that may prompt people to utilize devices which could cause fires or produce carbon monoxide (CO), an invisible, odorless, tasteless gas that is highly poisonous.

- [Carbon Monoxide Brochure](#)
- [Carbon Monoxide Brochure en Español](#)
- [Prevent A Home Heating Fire](#)
- [Como prevenir incendios al calentar su hogar](#)

Depending on the level of exposure, CO may cause fatigue, weakness, chest pains for those with heart disease, shortness of breath upon exertion, nausea, vomiting, headaches, confusion, lack of coordination, impaired vision, loss of consciousness and in severe cases, death. Improper venting and use of a generator or other gasoline-propelled equipment may cause carbon monoxide poisoning.

Additional Sources of information

[New York State Department of Health](#)

- Repairing Your Flooded Home (American Red Cross and Federal Emergency Management Agency publication)
- How to Use a Disposable Respirator
- Flood Recovery – Restoring Water Wells
- Residential Oil Spills and Flooding: What Homeowners Need to Know

NYSDOH – Center for Environmental Health – (800)-458-1158

[Federal Emergency Management Office \(FEMA\)](#)

[American Red Cross](#) (800)-787-9282

[Salvation Army](#)

Environmental Protection Agency (212) 637-3000

- Asbestos in Your Home
- Reducing Lead Hazards When Remodeling Your Home

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- [Clean Up Safely after a Natural Disaster](#)
- [Flood Water After a Disaster or Emergency](#)
- [Reentering Your Flooded Home](#)
- [Repairing Your Flooded Home](#)
- [When There's a Flood, What You Need to Know](#)