

# SAFETY TIPS TO REMEMBER BEFORE STARTING FLOOD CLEANUP

- Floodwaters can turn your house into one gigantic live wire. In severe cases, just touching the house could cause electrocution. Shorted out wires are only a few of the dangers that may await those returning to flooded homes.
- Don't even enter the flooded home until both the electricity and gas have been shut off. In towns, electricity should be shut off for entire neighborhoods by the electric company. In rural areas, the electricity should be switched off at the meter outside. Never cross damp floors inside the home in an attempt to shut off electrical power at the fuse box. There is too much danger of electrocution.
- Gas should be turned off outside, preferably by the power company. Residents with gas tanks should turn off the gas at the tank. Open windows and doors to help remove gases in the house. Don't smoke or use any open flames because they could cause gases to explode.
- When entering a home that's been flooded, stay alert. The home may have severe structural damage, and it may be slippery. It is awful easy to fall down muddy stairs or get struck on the head by a piece of falling plaster.
- Use bleach with caution. Bleach should not be mixed with other household cleaners, especially those containing ammonia, because an extremely deadly chlorine gas can form. There have been several cases in which people were overcome by hazardous fumes. Accidents can happen when an area is first disinfected with bleach, and then other cleaners are used. Make sure the area is thoroughly rinsed with uncontaminated water before bleach is used. Never mix bleach with other chemicals, cleaners, or household products. The recommended solution for bleach is ½ cup bleach per gallon of water for general disinfectant use.

Compiled by specialists from the Iowa State University Extension Service and the North Dakota State University Extension Service.