



Tom Barrett
Mayor

Bevan K. Baker, FACHE
Commissioner of Health

Raquel M. Filmanowicz
Health Operations Administrator

Health Department Family and Community Health Services

web site: www.milwaukee.gov/health

For Immediate Release
July 29, 2010

Media Contacts: Kawanza Newson Jodie Tabak
414-286-3548 Office 414-286-8504
414-732-7250 Mobile 414-708-7963

Residents Urged to Clean Wet Areas Now to Prevent Mold Growth And Other Indoor Air Quality Problems

Individuals with special needs should call 286-CITY for clean-up assistance

City of Milwaukee health officials strongly urge residents to immediately clean, disinfect and thoroughly dry all areas that floodwater touched within their home to prevent the growth of mold. It's also important to remove damaged ceiling tiles and wallboards, and to thoroughly clean and disinfect Heating, Ventilation and Air-Conditioning (HVAC) systems, including ductwork or furnaces that were submerged in floodwater, officials say.

Excessive moisture or water indoors promotes mold growth and can cause potential health effects in people with allergies, asthma, and other respiratory complaints.

Mayor Barrett along with the Office of Emergency Management have mobilized a volunteer reception center to assist Milwaukee residents who are elderly, disabled or ill and in need of assistance with flood-related problems, including debris clean-up in basements. Individuals with special needs can call 286-CITY to request assistance.

Residents should document damage with photos and save all receipts related to flood damage replacement.

Here are tips on how to safely clean affected areas due to flooding:

- Do not wade into standing water in your basement unless you are sure the electricity to your home is off.
- Unless you are certain basement flood waters came from around the foundation or from window wells you should **assume it contains sewage**.
- **Minimize skin exposure** by wearing rubber boots and gloves and keep children and pets away from flood contaminated surfaces.
- As soon as the water is drained away all wet items should be cleaned and thoroughly dried within 48 hours of flooding to **prevent the growth of mold**.
- When cleaning, items should first be washed with soap and water to remove visible debris and dirt. A disinfecting solution of ½ to ¾ cup household bleach to 1 gallon of water should then be applied to the surface and allowed to air dry.
- **Promptly fix any leaks** in your home's roof, walls, or plumbing to eliminate moisture that could promote mold growth.
- **Discard wet carpet, rugs, and upholstery that cannot be easily cleaned** to prevent mold growth.
- Keep the humidity level in your home between 40% and 60% **to prevent mold growth**.

MHD's "Flood Clean-up Tips" is available at www.milwaukee.gov/health and the City of Milwaukee home page: www.milwaukee.gov.

Think Health. Act Now!