



N E W S F O R I M M E D I A T E R E L E A S E

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Post-Hurricane Health and Safety Tips

VOLUSIA COUNTY, FLORIDA – Volusia County Emergency Management officials urge residents and visitors to follow these prevention tips.

FOOD ILLNESS

- Do not eat any food that may have come into contact with dirty water from floods or tidal surges.
- Do not eat from cans that are bulging or open. Cans that are not opened can be saved if you remove the labels and then disinfect them. Use a quarter cup of bleach in one gallon of clean water and let stand at least 30 minutes. Re-label the cans—include expiration date and type of food. Assume that home-canned foods are unsafe and throw them out.
- Infants should be fed only ready-to-feed baby formula or prepare powdered or concentrated liquid formula with sterilized water. Use only sanitized bottles and nipples. Unused prepared formula must be refrigerated. (If you are breastfeeding, continue to breastfeed.)
- Refrigerators and freezers that have been without power since the storm should be cleaned out. Those perishables are unsafe for eating.

WATER ILLNESS

- Use soap and water that has been boiled or disinfected. Wash your hands before eating, after toilet use, after cleanup activities, and after handling things dirtied by floodwater or sewage.
- If your area is put on a boil-water notice, you must take precautions against dirty water especially if you have a private well. If you are not sure if your water is safe, drink commercially bottled water.
- Hold water to a rolling boil for one minute to remove bacteria.
- To disinfect water, add eight drops of plain, unscented household bleach per gallon of water, mix, and let it stand for 30 minutes. If the water is cloudy after 30 minutes, repeat the procedure.
- Floodwater may contain raw sewage. If you have exposed open cuts or sores to floodwater, keep them as clean as possible by washing with soap and clean water. Apply antibiotic ointment after washing. If a wound or sore develops redness, swelling or drainage, see a doctor.
- Children should not play in floodwater or with toys that have been in floodwater. Disinfect toys by using one-quarter cup of bleach in one gallon of clean water, let stand for at least 30 minutes, and let toys air dry.

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HEAT EXHAUSTION ILLNESS

- Warning signs include heavy sweating, paleness, muscle cramps, tiredness, weakness, dizziness, headache, nausea or vomiting, or fainting.
- Cool off. Drink cool, nonalcoholic beverages; take a cool shower, bath, or sponge bath; wear lightweight clothing; and rest in an air-conditioned environment.
- Heat exhaustion may lead to heat stroke. Severe symptoms include skin that is cool and moist, a pulse rate that is fast and weak, and breathing that is fast and shallow. Seek medical attention immediately if symptoms last longer than one hour, or you have heart problems or high blood pressure.

CARBON MONOXIDE ILLNESS

- Carbon monoxide is an invisible, odorless, tasteless gas and is highly poisonous. It can cause tiredness, weakness, chest pains for those with heart disease, shortness of breath, nausea, vomiting, headaches, confusion, impaired vision, loss of consciousness, and, in severe cases, death.
- Do not use gas-powered generators or pressure washers indoors, not even in the garage. Do not burn charcoal or gas grills inside a house, garage, vehicle, tent, or fireplace.
- If you think you have been poisoned, open doors and windows, turn off gas appliances and go outside. Call 911 or the nearest Poison Information Center at 800-222-1222.

FIRE SAFETY

Volusia County Fire Rescue recommends that residents use battery-powered lanterns and flashlights. If you must use candles, put them in safe holders away from curtains, paper, wood, or other flammable items.

If you plan to use a generator, firefighters urge you to follow these safety tips:

- **Placement is key.** Never use generators indoors or outside near windows, vents or air intakes that could allow carbon monoxide (CO) to come indoors. This can be fatal.
- **Use proper care.** Proper ventilation is critical to reducing the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning from a generator's engine exhaust.
- **Keep other items clear.** Maintain plenty of air flow space around the generator.
- Pay attention. Get fresh air immediately if you begin to feel sick, dizzy or light-headed or experience flu-like symptoms.
- **Buy a CO detector.** Because CO is invisible and odorless, buy a CO detector (similar to or sometimes combined in a smoke detector) to warn of rising CO levels.
- **Ground your generator.** Carefully follow instructions on properly "grounding" the generator.
- **Keep the generator dry.** Short circuits may occur in wet conditions, which can cause a generator fire. If needed, place the generator under an open canopy-type structure.
- **Be prepared.** Always keep a fully charged fire extinguisher nearby.
- **Never back-feed power.** Do not plug the generator into a wall outlet. Back feeding will put you and others, including utility line workers, at serious risk because the utility transformer can increase low voltage from the generator to thousands of volts.
- **Don't touch. It's hot.** The exterior portions of a generator, even if operated for only a short period of time, can become hot.

MOSQUITO ILLNESS

- Heavy rains and flooding lead to an increase in mosquitoes. Volusia County Mosquito Control employees are working to control the spread of any diseases transmitted by mosquitoes.
- Drain standing water to stop mosquitoes from multiplying. Discard old tires, drums, bottles, cans, pots and pans, broken appliances and other items that aren't being used. Empty and clean birdbaths and pets' water bowls at least once or twice a week. Protect boats and vehicles from rain with tarps that don't accumulate water. Maintain the water balance (pool chemistry) of swimming pools. Empty plastic swimming pools when not in use.
- Cover your skin with clothing and use mosquito repellent. If you must be outside when mosquitoes are active, cover up. Wear shoes, socks, long pants, and long sleeves. Apply mosquito repellent to bare skin and clothing. Always use repellents according to the label. Repellents with DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, and IR3535 are effective. Use mosquito netting to protect children younger than two months.
- Cover doors and windows with screens to keep mosquitoes out. Keep mosquitoes out of your house. Repair broken screens on windows, doors, porches, and patios.