



## Newaygo County Emergency Services Department

### Access and Re-entry

The re-entry process is designed for the safe, orderly, and timely return of citizens, emergency responders, business, and critical services following an emergency when immediate re-entry by everyone is neither prudent nor possible. The immediate and/or simultaneous return of all evacuees might not be feasible due to post-event conditions and the need to restore critical infrastructure, protect homes and businesses of evacuees, stabilize and prepare the community for permanent return of its citizens and businesses, and ensure the safety of returning citizens. A specific access and re-entry process will be developed for each incident following a wide-scale evacuation.

### For your safety: What you need to know

#### **Safety Inspections**

Homes and businesses which have had electricity disconnected, utilities damaged, or buildings impacted by flood waters (roof, siding, walls, etc) will require additional safety inspections by the Building Inspector's Office, Environmental Health Sanitarian, and/or State Inspector's Office prior to being allowed to return. This Pre-Permit Inspection for Flood Damage is for the safety of the homeowner and/or business and will help them determine what necessary work needs to be completed for the owner to safely return.

1. Electrical Inspection is required if more than 18" of water was on the first floor, water submerged the breaker box, or the electrical meter was submerged or damaged.
2. Building Inspection is required if more than 18" of water was on the first floor for more than one day, foundation is cracked or shifted, home has major damaged or is destroyed.
3. Mechanical Inspection is required if there is damage to the furnace, hot water heater, propane tank, or other utilities within the home that would impact the safety of the homeowner.

**Please contact the Newaygo County Building Department at 231.689-7216 if you have a SAFETY ISSUE which has been identified.**

Please note: These processes are in place for your safety and to ensure you are protected. If you do repairs outside of established processes and without proper permits, it will make you ineligible for any recovery assistance programs which may be available locally, at the state, or federally.

#### **Restoration of Utilities**

Utility companies will not restore utilities to the impacted area unless deemed safe and marked by the Field Damage Assessment Teams, Public Safety Officials, and/or the Building Inspector's Office. Homes and businesses which require additional safety inspections or permit work to be completed, will be required to complete the work prior to having utilities restored.

#### **Debris Removal**

Debris removal from private property will be a rare occurrence and limited ONLY to those situations where there is a clear danger (present / imminent / potential) to public health and/or safety. Examples include but are not limited to:

- 1) dangerously leaning / damaged trees or limbs over public rights-of-way or other public spaces
- 2) partially or totally collapsed structures that could endanger the public
- 3) debris that poses a clear and present fire danger
- 4) debris that negatively impacts critical infrastructure and/or services

5) hazardous household waste (HHW) which if left unaddressed poses an imminent threat to public health and/or safety.

Debris that does not meet these (or similar) circumstances is the responsibility of individual property owners. Private debris brought to the roadway, right-of-way and/or taken to established Collection Centers in accordance with published guidelines will be removed by designated debris management forces.

**Newaygo County Emergency Operations Center is working on coordinating getting dumpsters in your subdivision for repair and cleanup, courtesy of support from the Fremont Area Community Foundation. Please contact 231.689.7354 or follow <https://newaygocountymi.gov> for further information**

#### **Disaster Assistance**

Based on the impacts and damage to the community from the flood, the Newaygo County Emergency Operations Center will follow all State and Federal guidelines in an effort to receive disaster assistance resources to help the community recover. For information please follow <https://newaygocountymi.gov> for further information OR call 2-1-1.



# FLOODS AND YOUR HOME

Natural Disasters

Protecting your home during flood situations can involve a variety of actions, from inspecting and maintaining the property to installing protective devices or materials.

## Before A Flood

- **Determine the risk of flooding for your area**
  - The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)  
<http://water.usgs.gov/pubs/>
  - The National Weather Service  
<http://www.weather.gov/>
- **Identify potential hazards on your property.**
  - Know how to turn off electrical power, gas and water supplies.
  - Secure unstable materials that are outside your home (e.g. patio furniture, fuel tanks).
  - Protect your well by using heavy plastic and duct tape to seal the well cap and top of the well casing.
- **Protect your home.**
  - Build with or install flood-resistant materials.
  - Buy and install sump pumps with backup power (e.g., battery-operated).
  - Install backflow valves or plugs to prevent flood water from entering.
  - Place furnace, water heater, washer, dryer on cement blocks above projected flood elevation.
- **Stockpile emergency building materials.**
  - Plywood, plastic sheeting, lumber, nails, hammer, saw, pry bar, sandbags, shovel.
- **Safeguard your possessions.**
  - Create a room-by-room inventory of your possessions, include receipts and photos.
  - Gather copies of critical documents, such as finance records, insurance policies.
  - Keep these lists in a secure place (e.g. safe deposit box, waterproof container).
- **Flood insurance.**
  - Obtain flood insurance
  - Most standard home owner insurance policies do not cover floods.
  - The National Flood Insurance program is available in most areas. For more information [www.floodsmart.gov](http://www.floodsmart.gov)

## During a Flood

- **Stay informed.**
  - Listen to the radio or television for situation developments and evacuation instructions.
  - Do not ignore evacuation orders.
  - Follow designated evacuation routes.
- **If you must evacuate,**
  - Ensure your family's safety first.
  - Gather your emergency supply kit; take only essential items with you.
  - Shut off electrical power and natural gas or propane tanks to avoid fire, electrocution, or explosions.

## After a Flood

- **Return home only when officials have declared the area safe.**
- **Before entering - Assess the situation.**
  - Assess the impact and areas of damage to your home.
  - Identify sharp objects, dangerous materials, downed power lines, damaged gas lines, or other hazards (e.g., chemical spills).
  - If you smell natural or propane gas, or hear a hissing noise, leave immediately and call the fire department.
  - If power lines are down outside your home or buildings, do not step in any standing water.
- **Approach entrances carefully.**
  - Parts of your home or building structures may be collapsed or damaged.
  - Check if porch roofs and overhangs have all their supports.
- **Keep power off until an electrician has inspected your system for safety.**
- **Account for your inventory.**
  - Compare the list with the one prepared prior to the incident.
  - Take photographs of all damage for insurance or emergency assistance purposes.
- **Contact your insurance company or the National Flood Insurance program to file your claim.**
  - Your adjuster will need evidence of the damage to your home and possessions to prepare your claim.
  - Keep accurate records listing all clean-up and repair bills, flood-related living expenses and actual losses (furniture, appliances, clothing, etc).



- **Clean and disinfect items.**

- Walls, hard-surfaced floors, and many other household surfaces should be cleaned with soap and water and disinfected with a solution of 1 cup of bleach to five gallons of water.
- Thoroughly disinfect surfaces that may come in contact with food, such as counter tops, pantry shelves, refrigerators, etc.
- Areas where small children play should also be carefully cleaned.
- Wash all linens and clothing in hot water, or dry clean; For items that cannot be washed or dry cleaned, (mattresses, upholstered furniture), air dry in the sun, then spray thoroughly with disinfectant.
- Steam clean all carpeting. If there has been a backflow of sewage into the house, wear rubber boots and waterproof gloves during cleanup.
- Remove and discard contaminated household materials that cannot be disinfected, such as wallcoverings, cloth, rugs, and drywall.

- **Prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.**

- Alternative sources of fuel or electricity for heating, cooling, or cooking can cause carbon monoxide to build up in a home, garage, or camper.
- Never run a gas-powered equipment (generator, pressure washer, engines) inside, even if the doors or windows are open.
- Avoid running gas-powered equipment near open windows, doors, or vents where exhaust can enter indoor enclosed areas.

- **Clean up safely.**

- Be aware of hazards that may cause injury to you or others cleaning up - these can include chain saw or pressure washer injuries, electrical or chemical hazards, heat exposure.
- Have an electrician check the house's electrical system before turning the power on again.
- If the house has been closed up for several days. Enter briefly to open doors and windows to let the house air out for awhile (at least 30 minutes) before you stay for any length of time.
- Presume your home has been contaminated with mold.
- Use fans and dehumidifiers to remove excess moisture. Fans should be placed so air blows outwards rather than inwards.
- Have your home heating, ventilating, and air-conditioning (HVAC) system checked and cleaned by a maintenance or service professional who is experienced in mold clean-up before you turn it on.

- **Prevent mold growth.**

- Remove any items that have been wet for more than 48 hours, that cannot be thoroughly cleaned and dried.
- Porous items include carpeting, carpet padding, upholstery, wallpaper, drywall, floor and ceiling tiles, insulation material, some clothing, leather, paper, wood, and food –can remain a source of mold growth and should be removed from the home.
- When in doubt, take it out!

- **Well and pump inspection.**

- There is a danger of electrical shock from any electrical device that has been flooded.
- Do not turn on the pump and electrical system until equipment has dried and been checked by a qualified electrician, or well professional.
- Swiftly moving flood water can carry large debris that can damage the hardware, construction or casing of wells and pumps.
- Flood water could have also entered the well and contaminated it.
- Well water should be sampled and tested for contamination prior to use for drinking, cooking or cleaning.
- Call you state laboratory certification officer or contact the Safe Drinking Water hotline (1-800-426-4791) <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/hotline/index.html>

- **Septic systems.**

- Septic systems should not be used immediately after floods; drain fields will not work until water in the soil absorption field is lower than the water level around the house.
- Floodwater may have also broken septic lines. Have your septic tank professionally inspected and serviced; septic tanks may contain dangerous gases.

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*Information adapted from publications by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Red Cross, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Environmental Protection Agency, and University of Wisconsin Extension.*

**For more information, see [www.Prepare4AgThreats.org](http://www.Prepare4AgThreats.org)**

## NEWAYGO COUNTY BUILDING DEPARTMENT

Phone 231-689-7216 Hrs: 8:00 A.M. to Noon & 1:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M.

DATE: 04/18/2026

Your home and property have been impacted by flood water. For the practical safeguarding of persons and property from the hazards arising from the use of electricity in your structure(s), certain precautions will need to be followed.

Electrical meter socket enclosures that have been submerged or that have had substantial water ingress shall not be re-energized and will need to be replaced. Electrical service equipment, including service disconnects and panelboard enclosures that have been submerged or have had substantial water ingress shall, likewise, not be re-energized and shall also be required to be replaced. Circuit breakers that have been submerged, or that have gotten wet, cannot be re-used.

Branch circuit wiring that has been submerged or saturated with water is not safe for re-use and shall not be energized or continued in use. All wiring devices such as switches and receptacles that have been underwater, or that have had their terminals and contact surfaces exposed to water shall be removed and replaced.

Electrical equipment such as furnace blower motors, well pump pressure switches, and freezer or refrigerator compressors that have been submerged or otherwise saturated with water must be replaced.

It is understandable that you wish to get power restored as soon as possible to begin the process of returning your life to normal. However, there are certain additional precautions which you will need to take should you want to use a generator once you have been permitted to re-enter your home. In order to protect persons and equipment from inadvertent back-feed of electrical energy, generators shall not be connected to the premises wiring system without having the proper interconnection or transfer equipment installed. Back-feeds from improperly installed generators can endanger not only you, but the lives and property of your neighbors, first responders, and line workers. Portable generators should only be used with extension cords which are in good condition and plugged into GFCI protected receptacles on the generator.

Please also be aware that if you make repairs outside of the established processes, and without proper permits, you may not only delay your ability to re-occupy your home, but you will be ineligible for any recovery assistance programs.

**Maurie Van Nevel**  
**Chief Electrical Inspector**  
**North Country Inspection Services, LLC**  
**Ph.231-689-7216**



**CRAWFORD COUNTY**  
501 Norway Street  
Suite #1  
Grayling, MI 49738  
(989) 348-7800

**KALKASKA COUNTY**  
625 Courthouse Drive  
Kalkaska, MI 49646  
(231) 258-8669

**LAKE COUNTY**  
5681 S. M-37  
Baldwin, MI 49304  
(231) 745-4663

**MANISTEE COUNTY**  
385 Third Street  
Manistee, MI 49660  
(231) 723-3595

**MASON COUNTY**  
916 Diana Street  
Ludington, MI 49431  
(231) 845-7381

**MECOSTA COUNTY**  
14485 Northland Drive  
Big Rapids, MI 49307  
(231) 592-0130

**MISSAUKEE COUNTY**  
6180 W. Sanborn Road  
Suite #1  
Lake City, MI 49651  
(231) 839-7167

**NEWAYGO COUNTY**  
PO Box 850  
1049 Newell Street  
White Cloud, MI 49349  
(231) 689-7300

**OCEANA COUNTY**  
3986 N. Oceana Drive  
Hart, MI 49420  
(231) 873-2193

**WEXFORD COUNTY**  
521 Cobb Street  
Cadillac, MI 49601  
(231) 775-9942



[www.dhd10.org](http://www.dhd10.org)



[www.facebook.com/DHD10](https://www.facebook.com/DHD10)

April 17, 2026

## District Health Department #10

### Notice to Homeowners:

**Septic Systems:** For the disposal of your wastewater, you have a drainfield. A drainfield works by allowing the wastewater to drain into a soil/gravel layer for treatment. If this layer is flooded, the drainfield will not work and wastewater/sewage may back up into the home. Showers, sinks, and toilets should not be used until at least a full day after the floodwaters have receded.

**Water Supply:** If your well head has been submerged, there is a high potential for your drinking water to be contaminated. It is recommended that your well be chlorinated by a registered Michigan Well Driller. Once the well has been chlorinated, the water needs to be sampled for bacteria to ensure that it is safe to begin using again. Information on water testing and certified drinking water testing laboratories can be found here: <https://www.dhd10.org/environmental-health/well-septic/drinking-water/>. Until a safe water sample is confirmed, the water should not be used for drinking or cooking. Bottled water may be used as a temporary source of water.

**Building:** If the house has been flooded, there is a concern that mold will begin to grow on the structure. Mold will cause allergy, asthma, and upper respiratory irritation. A professional flood clean-up service should be contacted.

**DHD#10 Contact Information:** If you need additional information on health concerns, please contact our office at 231-355-7537.



**MEDIA CONTACT:**  
Nicholas Eckhart  
Public Information Officer  
O: 616-500-0246  
E: media@dhd10.org



**COUNTIES SERVED:**

Crawford  
Kalkaska  
Lake  
Manistee  
Mason  
Mecosta  
Missaukee  
Newaygo  
Oceana  
Wexford



[www.dhd10.org](http://www.dhd10.org)



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## Well and Septic: Flood Safety

April 15, 2026 – District Health Department #10 (DHD#10) is reminding residents that flooding can disrupt septic systems and contaminate private drinking water wells, which can create serious health risks for homeowners. DHD#10 is urging residents to be cautious before flooding occurs and use caution during cleanup and recovery.

“Flooding can cause damage that isn’t always visible,” said DHD#10 Environmental Health Director Max Bjorkman. “Taking the time to protect septic systems when you can and testing private wells before returning to normal use, helps identify contamination to our residents’ drinking water while also helping prevent illness.”

Below are tips from Michigan’s Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE):

### Private Well Safety During Flooding

#### Before Floodwaters Arrive

- If floodwater reaches your well, the water may become unsafe to drink.
- Store enough clean or bottled water for drinking and food preparation.
- Shut off electrical power to the well before flooding occurs.
- If the well cap or seal is not watertight, cover it with a heavy-duty plastic barrier and secure it tightly.
- Gather and protect well construction and service records.

#### After a Flood

- Do not drink well water until testing confirms it is safe, even if the water appears clear.
- Use bottled water or boil water for at least five minutes before use.
- Contact a certified well contractor for inspection if flooding reached the well.
- Have the well tested for coliform bacteria before returning it to regular use.

### Protect Your Septic

#### Before a Flood

- Make sure your septic system is working properly and fix leaks to reduce excess water.
- Direct surface water away from the septic area if possible.
- Do not empty your septic tank ahead of flooding; empty tanks can shift or float.
- Seal tank lids, risers, and cleanout caps, and plan to conserve water during a flood.

#### During a Flood

- Avoid using toilets, sinks, dishwashers, and washing machines.
- Never direct sump pumps or water softeners into the septic system.
- Turn off power to septic pumps and alarms.
- Watch for slow drains or sewage backing up inside the home.

#### After the Flood

- Do not use your septic system until the water has receded and the soil has dried.

- Check for damage such as sinking ground, sewage on the surface, or strong odors.
- Contact DHD#10, or a professional, if damage is suspected.
- Avoid driving or parking over the drainfield; repair erosion and reseed grass.
- Wear protective gear when cleaning and never dispose of floodwater or chemicals into the system.

For more information from EGLE regarding well safety, please visit:

<https://www.michigan.gov/egle/-/media/Project/Websites/egle/Documents/Programs/DWEHD/Water-Well-Construction/Protecting-Your-Private-Water-Supply-in-an-Emergency.pdf>.

For more information about DHD#10, please visit: <https://www.dhd10.org/>.

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# EGLE

## FACT SHEET

DRINKING WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DIVISION – ENVIRONMENTAL ASSISTANCE CENTER 800-662-9278

### PROTECTING YOUR PRIVATE WATER SUPPLY IN AN EMERGENCY

Emergencies, such as power outages and flooding, can threaten the quality of drinking water from your water well system. This fact sheet reviews the potential hazards arising from emergency situations and gives advice on how to protect you and your family against illness.

#### Electrical power outage

Under normal operation an electric water pump draws groundwater from the well and maintains the water pressure within the storage tank and piping. Pressurization forms a physical barrier that protects the drinking water against the entrance of contaminants. During a power outage a water well system will lose pressure if faucets are opened. As a result, bacteria, viruses, and other disease-causing organisms can find their way into the water system. The water can become contaminated without any noticeable change in taste, odor, or clarity.

During extended power outages it is important to refrain from opening faucets, taking showers, or flushing toilets. While your water system may have several gallons of water in storage, withdrawing water while the power is out depressurizes the system and increases the risk of contamination.

If your water system loses all of its pressure (no water comes out of the faucet), it is a good idea to have the water checked for coliform bacteria.

#### Flooding

If flooding occurs around your water well, your drinking water may become contaminated. When flood waters rise over the top of the well, contaminants can enter through the well cap or vent and increase the risk of illness. The well can act as a drain as flood water cascades down the casing into the aquifer. Flood water contains bacteria and viruses from soil, organic debris, and sewage systems along with fertilizers, pesticides, and other chemical contaminants. Shallow wells and old, poorly-constructed wells (e.g. dug wells) are vulnerable to water quality changes when turbid flood waters deposit contaminants close to the well. Older wells located in below grade pits are vulnerable to contamination from flooding, even if flooding at the ground surface did not occur. Well pits are unsanitary and are prone to flooding after heavy spring rains or rapid snowmelt occur and surface water or the water level within the surrounding soil gathers within the pit.

If you use "city water," the risk of contamination is very low. Community wells are generally well protected from flood water. All community water systems are also carefully monitored by the water supply operator and the state. If your water supply does become contaminated, you will be notified promptly.

There have even been documented cases of a homeowner's well water becoming cloudy after a heavy rain. If you suspect your drinking water is contaminated, you should obtain water from a known safe source for drinking, cooking, and food preparation. Drinking or washing with water from a private well that has been flooded can make you sick. Use bottled water for drinking and cooking until your well is safe to use again. If you must use the well water for drinking or food preparation before the well has been disinfected and tested, the water must be boiled at a rolling boil for at least 5 minutes before use.

If your well has been flooded, you should immediately refrain from drinking the water and take the following steps:

1. After flushing the chlorine from the system, collect a water sample and submit it to a certified laboratory for coliform bacteria analysis.
2. Contact your local health department for further assistance if needed.

#### inspect the well and pump

Conditions at the Well - Sediment and floodwater may enter the well through the well cap and contaminate it. Older or shallow wells are likely to be contaminated, even if there is no apparent damage. Well pits can be very hazardous-people have died from asphyxiation or electrocution in well pits. Before entering any well pit, please obtain professional help or guidance on proper safety precautions.

**Electrical System** - After floodwaters have receded and the pump and electrical system have dried, make certain a qualified electrician, well contractor or pump contractor checks the equipment's wiring before you turn it on. You can be shocked or damage your well or pump if they have been flooded.

**Pump Operation** - Sediment and floodwater can damage pumps and their electrical components. Get assistance from a well or pump contractor who will know how to clean, repair, or maintain different types of pumps.

### **Clean and flush the well**

Once the flooding recedes, remove mud, silt, and other debris from around the top of the well. The pump may need to be removed so that mud and silt can be removed from the bottom of the well. Begin flushing the water system. Hook a hose up to an outside faucet or a faucet near the water storage tank and flush the water for at least 2 hours after the water clears up. If a large volume of flood water entered the well, several hours of pumping may be needed. Once the water is clear at the storage tank, flush the home distribution piping.

### **Disinfect the well**

**Drilled, driven, or bored wells** - It is best to have a well contractor disinfect these wells because it is difficult for the private owner to thoroughly disinfect them.

**Dug wells** - Do not attempt to disinfect or use a dug well that has been flooded.

**CAUTION:** Wells can become contaminated in a number of different ways, including bacteria, wastewater from malfunctioning septic systems, or chemicals seeping into the ground. So taking long-range precautions is necessary, including repeated testing, to protect the safety of drinking water.

### **Water testing**

After flushing the chlorine from the system, collect a water sample and submit it to a certified laboratory for coliform bacteria analysis. Homeowners should periodically test their drinking water for coliform bacteria. An annual test is recommended (or more frequently if the taste, odor, or water clarity changes). Coliform bacteria (common in the intestines of warm-blooded animals) are indicators of the potential for disease-causing organisms to be present in the water supply. Tests for metals, petroleum products, pesticides, and other chemicals are also available from state or privately operated laboratories. Water sample bottles, information about which test may be most appropriate for your situation, and interpretation of water test results are available from your local health department.

If your water system was completely depressurized during a power outage or if your well was flooded, it is especially important to check the water quality before continuing to consume the water. The water is considered safe for drinking after two consecutive samples, collected 8 hours apart, show that coliform bacteria are not present.

### **Temporary water supply**

If your water system was depressurized during interruption of electrical power or if flooding of the well has occurred, the water should not be consumed until testing has verified that it is potable (fit to drink). Here are some alternatives to ensure that you and your family have a safe temporary drinking water supply until your water system is restored:

- Keep a supply of bottled water on hand as emergency drinking water. A few 5-gallon pails filled with water and stored in your basement are helpful for toilet flushes and other nonpotable uses during power outages.
- Water can be boiled to kill any harmful microorganisms. Bring the water to a rolling boil for at least 2 minutes; then let it cool. Pouring the water back and forth between two clean containers will re-aerate the water and freshen the taste.
- Water can be disinfected with household chlorine bleach (unscented) by applying 10 drops of bleach per gallon of water. Allow at least 4 hours of contact time before drinking. Avoid attempting to disinfect turbid or cloudy water.
- A portable water filtration/purification unit (available at camping or backpacking stores) can be used to prepare small amounts of drinking water. These rely on a hand-operated pump to force the water through a filter (typically less than one quart per minute). Be sure that the unit will remove microorganisms down to 0.3 microns in size. Carefully follow the filter manufacturer's instructions.

*For information or assistance on this publication, please contact the Drinking Water and Environmental Health Division, through EGLE's Environmental Assistance Center at 800-662-9278. This publication is available in alternative formats upon request.*

*This publication is intended for guidance only and may be impacted by changes in legislation, rules, policies, and procedures adopted after the date of publication. Although this publication makes every effort to teach users how to meet applicable compliance obligations, use of this publication does not constitute the rendering of legal advice.*