



Returning Home General Tips

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Returning home can be both physically and mentally challenging. Above all, use caution.

Check for injuries. Do not attempt to move seriously injured persons unless they are in immediate danger of death or further injury. If you must move an unconscious person, first stabilize the neck and back, then call for help immediately.

- Keep a battery-powered radio with you so you can listen for emergency updates and news reports.
- Use a battery-powered flashlight to inspect a damaged home.
Note: The flashlight should be turned on outside before entering - the battery may produce a spark that could ignite leaking gas, if present.
- Watch out for animals, especially poisonous snakes. Use a stick to poke through debris.
- Be wary of wildlife and other animals
- Use the phone only to report life-threatening emergencies.
- Stay off the streets. If you must go out, watch for fallen objects; downed electrical wires; and weakened walls, bridges, roads, and sidewalks.

Before You Enter Your Home

Walk carefully around the outside and check for loose power lines, gas leaks, and structural damage. If you have any doubts about safety, have your residence inspected by a qualified building inspector or structural engineer before entering.

Do not enter if:

- You smell gas.
- Floodwaters remain around the building.
- Your home was damaged by fire and the authorities have not declared it safe.

Wildlife in Disasters

- **Do not corner wild animals or try to rescue them.** Call your local animal control office or wildlife resource office. Wild animals often seek higher ground which, during floods, eventually become submerged (i.e., island) and the animals become stranded. If the island is large enough and provides suitable shelter, you can leave food appropriate to the species (i.e., sunflower seeds for squirrels). Animals have a flight response and will flee from anyone approaching too closely. If the animal threatens to rush into the water, back away from the island or you may frighten the animal into jumping into the water to escape from you.
- **Do not approach wild animals that have taken refuge in your home.** Wild animals such as snakes, opossums, and raccoons often seek refuge from floodwaters on upper levels of homes and have been known to remain after water recedes. If you encounter animals in this situation, open a window or provide another escape route and the animal will likely leave on its own. Do not attempt to capture or handle the animal. Should the animal stay, call your local animal control office or wildlife resource office.
- **Beware of an increased number of snakes and other predators.** These animals will try to feed on the carcasses of reptiles, amphibians and small mammals who have been drowned or crushed in their burrows or under rocks.
- **Do not attempt to move a dead animal.** Animal carcasses can present serious health risks. Outbreaks of anthrax, encephalitis and other diseases may occur. Contact your local emergency management office or health department for help and instructions.
- **Do not corner wild animals or try to rescue them.** Wild animals will likely feel threatened and may endanger themselves by dashing off into floodwaters, fire, and so forth.
- **If bitten by an animal, seek immediate medical attention.**