

## Inspecting Utilities In A Damaged Home Fact Sheet

When entering your home, use extreme caution. Hurricane-driven flood waters may have damaged your home where you least expect it. You should take the following measures when returning and inspecting your utilities in a damaged home:

- Watch every step you take.
- Wear sturdy shoes. The most common injury following a disaster is cut feet.
- Use battery-powered flashlights when examining your home. Battery-powered lighting is the safest and easiest, preventing fire hazard for the user, occupants, and building.
- Examine walls, floors, doors, staircases, and windows to make sure that the home is not in danger of collapsing.
- Inspect foundations for cracks or other damage. Cracks and damage to a foundation can make a home unlivable.
- Check for gas leaks. If you smell gas or hear blowing or hissing noise, open a window and quickly leave the home. Turn off the gas at the outside main valve if you can and call the gas company from a neighbor's home. *If you turn off the gas for any reason, a professional must turn it back on.*
- Look for fire hazards. There may be broken or leaking gas lines, flooded electrical circuits, or submerged furnaces or electrical appliances. Flammable or explosive materials may come from upstream. Fire is the most frequent hazard following floods.
- Watch out for animals, especially poisonous snakes that may have come into your home with the flood waters. Use a stick to poke through debris. Flood waters flush many animals and snakes out of their homes.
- Watch for loose plaster, drywall, and ceilings that could fall. Take pictures of the damages, both of the home and its contents, for insurance claims.
- Open windows and doors to ventilate and dry your home.
- Service damaged septic tanks, cesspools, pits, and leaching systems as soon as possible. Damaged sewage systems are health hazards.

Source of Information:

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)  
[www.fema.org](http://www.fema.org)