



# Cowlitz County Health and Human Services

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## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 10, 2025

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Release #25-013

## Safe Clean-Up Practices After Flooding

LONGVIEW, Washington – Floods are among the most common natural disasters. Communities can experience flooding after heavy rain or when snow and ice melt. Floodwater can carry germs and other harmful substances, so it's important to take precautions during and after a flood. The tips below can help you stay safe when there is a risk of contaminated water.

### Clean-up tips:

- Keep children and pets out of flooded areas until clean-up is complete.
- Wear rubber gloves and boots and use eye protection.
- Avoid letting contaminated water touch your skin and wear items that can be sanitized afterwards.
- Wash your hands thoroughly and launder clothes separately after cleaning up.
- Saturated wall-to-wall carpeting and pads usually cannot be adequately cleaned. Remove them, wrap them in plastic, and take them to a transfer station or sanitary landfill. If you choose to keep the carpeting, hire a licensed carpet cleaning company to steam clean and disinfect it.
- Clean all hard surfaces—such as linoleum, hardwood floors, concrete, wood moldings, and metal or wood furniture—with hot water and mild detergent. Rinse with a bleach solution made by mixing one tablespoon of unscented liquid household bleach with one gallon of water. Allow surfaces to air dry.
- Disinfect clean-up tools like mops, brooms, and brushes with the bleach solution.
- Increase air circulation to prevent mold and reduce odors by opening windows and doors. Fans and heaters can help speed drying.

Additional resources are available at [www.co.cowlitz.wa.us/prepared](http://www.co.cowlitz.wa.us/prepared).

To contact Health & Human Services, please call 360-414-5599.

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