

Safety precautions after a disaster

Why is safety a concern after a disaster?

After a disaster, damage to property may cause unusual and additional safety hazards. Many disaster-related injuries and deaths occur due to injuries resulting from clean up in the *aftermath* of a disaster.

What can I do to reduce my chances of injury after a disaster?

General Safety Tips

- Wear sturdy shoes when entering a building or walking through debris after a disaster.
- Carry a flashlight when entering dark buildings.
- Do not enter a building if the foundation has shifted or has been weakened.
- Do not demolish a building or house without professional help. The Public Works Department or licensed contractors can help you.
- Buildings must be declared safe before they can be entered.

Heating equipment safely

- If you smell gas, open all windows and doors. Do not use matches, candles, lighters, or turn on the stove. Sparks can ignite the gas and cause a fire or an explosion. Call the gas company from your neighbor's house.
- If you suspect there is damage to the heating equipment, do not use it until a qualified service representative has checked it.

Electrical equipment safety

WARNING: *Never use wet electrical appliances. They may cause an electric shock, overheat, or start a fire.*

Do not touch any exposed cable or electrical wire.

Safe storage of garbage

- Store garbage away from food and water.
- Have a spare container with a tight fitting lid to store garbage in case regular pick-up is not available.
- Report all unusual waste (animal carcasses, asbestos, and so on)

Safety tips for children

- Do not allow children to wade or play in contaminated water or sand.
- Do not leave cleaning buckets with even small amounts of liquids unattended. Toddlers are "top heavy" and if they topple into a bucket, it may not tip over and they could drown.

What should I do if an injury occurs?

-Clean puncture wounds or cuts with soap and water. You may need to see your health care provider for a tetanus shot or antibiotics. In case of serious injury, go to an emergency room or call 911.

