



# Safety After The Storm

## Water Safety

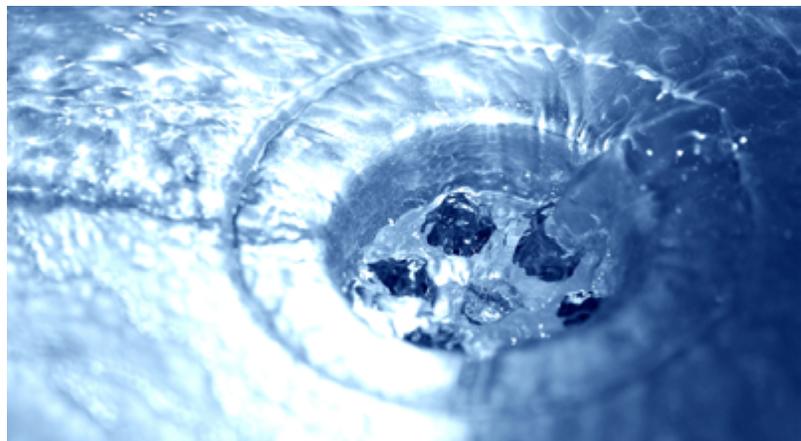
Water is an essential natural resource for humans, wildlife and the environment. However, after a storm or flood, it can become deadly. “Floodwater is frequently contaminated with septic waste, oil and construction debris,” says John Drenenberg, consumer affairs director for UL, a global safety organization. “It’s important for consumers to be aware of these dangers and take proper safety measures to help ensure their family’s well-being.”

All drinking water contains at least small amounts of some contaminants, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The presence of these contaminants does not indicate a health risk in drinking water under normal conditions, but experts suggest consumers take safety precautions before coming in contact with any type of water after a major storm.

Contamination occurs because:

- **Flooding can yield the risk of waterborne bacterial contaminations**, according to the Federal Alliance for Safe Homes (FLASH). Waterborne bacterial contaminants include fecal coliform and E. coli, which both indicate animal or human waste may be present in water.
- **Stormwater runoff can collect chemicals, debris, dirt and other pollutants** and flow directly into a storm sewer system or body of water, according to the EPA. When polluted stormwater enters a storm sewer system, it is untreated and discharged into bodies of water that may be used as a source for drinking water. To help prevent stormwater pollution, the EPA recommends consumers do not pour household products or hazardous waste into storm drains, onto the ground or into toilets and sinks. The EPA provides additional information on <http://water.epa.gov/action/weatherchannel/stormwater.cfm>

Whether it’s after a hurricane, tornado or blizzard, UL and FLASH recommend consumers consider these five tips before ingesting or swimming through water after a storm or flood:



1. Assume that the water is not safe to drink. Use properly stored water or boil your tap water.
2. Boil water at a roiling rate for 10 minutes if a boil order is issued in your community.
3. Control standing water and mosquitoes by applying a larvae control product to standing water or a film of vegetable oil to the surface.
4. Eliminate standing water if at all possible. Adequate drainage outside, adjacent to, and especially under your home is essential. Standing water under a home can cause high humidity levels inside and cause floors to warp and buckle.
5. Be aware of potential pest problems in your area, such as mice, rats, insects or snakes that may have “come with the storm.”

### About UL

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For more information, visit: [www.ul.com/stormsafety](http://www.ul.com/stormsafety)