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| Returning home after a flood |
| Information on how to stay safe after a flood  |
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When returning to your home after a flood, read this information to protect yourself and your family from possible injury or illness.

# **How to safely return home**

* Never walk, swim, or drive through flood waters, even if it is shallow. Keep children and pets away until it’s safe to return.
* Skin contact with floodwater and mud can cause illness and infections. Avoid contact with flood waters and wash your hands with soap regularly.
* Wear waterproof boots and rubber or leather gloves when cleaning up.
* Cover any cuts or sores that might have contact with floodwater. If you are injured or suffer a cut, clean the wound and contact your doctor immediately.
* Look out for these things before you enter home:
* flooding can cause sewage to enter your home
* gas or electricity supply may be damaged
* the structure of your house may be damaged
* snakes and other animals may take shelter in your house, shed or garden.
* throw out stagnant water that has collected in containers in your yard as mosquitoes breed in it
* if there is mould in your house, you must get it cleaned before you move back home.
* If you lost power, check the food or medicines in the fridge. You may need to throw them away.
* Don’t use a portable generator indoors as they can produce carbon monoxide which can make you very sick.
* Floods can contaminate your drinking water. Check with your water agency that your tap water is safe to drink. If you are not on mains water and think your private water supply is affected by the flood, contact your local council.
* Don’t swim in waterways, beaches, or swimming pools as they may be polluted.
* Floods can make parts of your house such as pipes, cement sheeting or tiles shift. If you find asbestos, do not disturb the material and contact your local council.
* If your wastewater system has been affected, reduce your water use and contact a plumber.

# **Look after yourself**

* It is normal to experience a lot of emotions, take a moment to look after yourself and reach out to your loved ones for support.
* If you are feeling overwhelmed, you can call Mental Health and Wellbeing Hubs for free support on 1300 375 330.
* If you are concerned about your health, see your GP. Call 000 in an emergency. If you are unable to call, you should travel to your closest hospital.
* If you or someone you know is in crisis, call Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Beyond Blue on 1300 224 636.

# **Get financial support**

* If your home has been affected by flooding, you may be eligible for a one-off emergency payment. For more information visit <https://emergencypayments.dffh.vic.gov.au>
* Re-establishment Assistance may be available if you cannot live in your home because it is damaged, or you cannot access your home for more than 7 days. For more information, visit <https://services.dffh.vic.gov.au/personal-hardship-assistance-program>
* Disaster Recovery Allowance is available for employees and sole traders who lose income because of a major disaster. Visit <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/natural-disaster-events?context=60042> for more information.
* You may be eligible for the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment if you have suffered a serious injury or your home was severely damaged due to a natural disaster. Visit <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/victoria-natural-disaster-support?context=60042> for more information.
* Call the Flood Recovery Hotline on 1800 560 760 for assistance with temporary accommodation and other support.
* If you need help with insurance matters, call the Insurance Council Australia’s disaster hotline on 1800 734 621.

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