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May 26, 2011

To whom it may concern:

**Subject: Flooding and Health Protection**

Northern BC is experiencing flooding, with direct impacts on residents and their properties. We want you to be aware of the potential health hazards and what you can do to help protect your families.

While responders implement a variety of flood protection activities, there are a number of actions you can take. NH has the following general suggestions for home owners returning to flooded homes:

1. Be careful when beginning a clean-up. If floodwaters have severely disturbed a home or property, there may be physical hazards. Those might include construction materials, electrical or plumbing components, as well as damaged floors and ceilings. Floodwaters may have also caused microbiological hazards such as contaminated water, wastewater, or mold, and chemical hazards (uncontained gas, oil, cleaning products, and pesticides).
2. Home owners on their own water supply will need to make sure the water is safe before using it after flooding. If flood waters have entered a well, it must be disinfected with bleach and tested before use. An environmental health officer can describe the necessary steps for this.
3. Always follow proper clean-up procedures to minimize health risks. The Provincial Emergency Program's website at [www.pep.bc.ca](http://www.pep.bc.ca) includes links to information on those safety procedures.

Several electronic documents have been attached to address the most common questions and concerns. These will also be made available for distribution through PEP, Municipalities and other responders.

If you have any questions or require further clarification, please feel free to contact your Environmental Health Officer at the local Public Health Protection office, or call toll free to Enquiry BC at 1-800-663-7867.

Yours truly

Doug Quibell  
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Northern Health

Attachments:

[MOH - Preparing for a flood](#)

[MOH - After a flood](#)

[MOH - Sewerage system flooding](#)

[MOH - What to do during a flood](#)

[BC Health File - Clean up after a flood](#)

[BC Health File - Disinfecting Drinking Water](#)