

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 12, 2017

South Central Public Health District advises on potential problems associated with flooding.

BLAINE COUNTY, ID - South Central Public Health District (SCPHD) advises the public to be aware of the potential hazards associated with flooding. SCPHD wants to offer simple tips on how residents can stay safe and healthy during flooding events.

“Flood water may contain harmful chemicals and sewage. People are encouraged to stay out of the water as much as possible. They should wash their hands frequently with warm water and soap if they come in contact with contaminated water,” stated Josh Jensen, Public Health Program Manager.

Flood waters are not clean, it is important to limit your exposure. Potential problems that may occur during flooding events include failing septic systems due to saturated drainfields, contaminated drinking water due to flooded wells, and mold issues.

Some tips to be safe during and after flooding events:

- **Injury Prevention:** Stay out of flood waters. Even the strongest swimmers can drown in flood waters. Do not drive through standing water. Never make contact with power lines or objects that are in contact with power lines. Wear proper protection when cleaning up debris.
- **Water:** Check for local boil-water advisories. Do not use contaminated water to wash dishes, brush teeth, prepare food, make ice or make baby formula.
- **Well water:** If your well has been affected by flood waters, it is recommended that you boil your water for at least one minute at a rolling boil, or obtain water from a safe source. Before resuming normal use of the well, have the water tested for possible bacteria.
- **Foods:** Do not eat foods that have come in contact with flood waters. Throw away food that cannot be kept cold or properly heated due to lack of power.
- **Carbon monoxide poisoning:** Don't use a generator, pressure washer, charcoal grill, camp stove, or other gasoline or charcoal-burning device inside your home, basement, garage, or near a window, door, or vent. Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas. If carbon monoxide poisoning is suspected, seek fresh air and consult with a health care professional right away.

- **Home safety:** If there is standing water in your home, never turn power on or off yourself – contact an electrician.
- **First aid:** Immediately clean all wounds with soap and clean water. If your skin or eyes come in contact with hazardous materials wash thoroughly with decontaminated water. Avoid getting cut because cuts can lead to tetanus. If possible, make sure your tetanus vaccination is up to date.
- **Mold:** Remove mold by washing with soap and water and letting surfaces dry completely. Some materials such as moldy clothing, ceiling tiles and sheet rock may have to be replaced.

To assist the public, the health district has setup a webpage with resources including a list of local, licensed contractors. phd5.idaho.gov/Environment/Flood.

For more information about food safety, wells, drinking water, and carbon monoxide during and after flooding, please call 866-710-9775 or visit phd5.idaho.gov/Environment/Flood.

###