

# The First 48 Hours – Returning Home

## General Tips

**Don't return to your flood-damaged home before the area is declared to be safe by local officials.** Returning home can be both physically and mentally challenging. Above all, use caution.

Check for injuries. Do not attempt to move seriously injured persons unless they are in immediate danger of death or further injury. If you must move an unconscious person, first stabilize the neck and back, then call for help immediately.

- Keep a battery-powered radio with you so you can listen for emergency updates and news reports.
- Use a battery-powered flash light to inspect a damaged home.  
Note: The flashlight should be turned on outside before entering - the battery may produce a spark that could ignite leaking gas, if present.
- Watch out for animals, especially poisonous snakes. Use a stick to poke through debris.
- Be wary of wildlife and other animals
- Use the phone only to report life-threatening emergencies.
- Stay off the streets. If you must go out, watch for fallen objects; downed electrical wires; and weakened walls, bridges, roads, and sidewalks.

## Before You Enter Your Home

Walk carefully around the outside and check for loose power lines, gas leaks, and structural damage. If you have any doubts about safety, have your residence inspected by a qualified building inspector or structural engineer before entering.

**Do not enter if:**

- You smell gas.
- Floodwaters remain around the building.
- Your home was damaged by fire and the authorities have not declared it safe.