

## SPRING FLOODING AND YOUR HEALTH:

### What you need to know

(NC) One day you go downstairs, unaware of what is quietly waiting for you in the dark. Your turn on a light and there it is — water everywhere.

After a flood, it's important to quickly restore your home to good order to protect your health and prevent further damage. Standing water and wet materials may carry viruses and will allow bacteria and mould to grow, which can present serious health risks.

Here's what you need to do after a flood:

#### Remove water, mud and other debris

- Remove standing water.
- Remove all soaked and dirty materials, debris

and any mud or soil.

- Clean walls and furnishings with a solution of soap and water. Remove remaining water with a pump or wet vacuum, and clean floors as quickly as possible.

#### Ensure your well water is safe

- During a flood, don't use well water for drinking, cooking, bathing, showering or brushing teeth.
- After a flood, don't start using your well water again until you get advice from your local health authority on cleanup, well disinfection and water testing to make sure your water is safe to use.

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## President's Perspective: Spring Reset

For many of us this year will be a year of renewal, and revitalization. And spring of course is a great time to think about shedding constraint and embracing the opportunity to reset at a time when the fair-weather season is approaching.

As the calendar turns to a new season, consider turning a page in your own personal calendar, too, and use the springtime as an opportunity for a physical and mental reset. Good mental and physical health is paramount to our well being in every way; how we engage with people, what and how we contribute, our ability to learn and grow and even from a safety perspective, our acuity when it comes to staying safe at home, at work and in the community. Physical and mental wellbeing are foundational blocks on which we build our lives, and a terrific place to start rebuilding.

On the topic of physical exercise, seek out an activity you enjoy. So many options exist to get you moving that you can safely set aside ideas that don't excite you. The traditional gym and cardio options aren't for everyone! Go to the things you enjoy. There is a lot going on in community centres and recreational activities that you can sign up for but also going for walks, gardening and doing work around the house are excellent aerobic activities and can be part of a successful physical exercise regime.

Importantly, ease into things. It won't take long before you are up to speed but trying to over-exert yourself or make up for lost time can result in injury or burnout, both of which can put even the best-laid plans into a tailspin.

Above all, ensure you're taking care of your body. Stretch before any strenuous activity, stay hydrated with plenty of water and electrolytes, and commit to fueling your body with a balanced diet that includes lean protein, grains and fresh produce.

Mentally, there's no better time to get reacquainted with the outdoors. As the weather warms up, committing to a routine that includes fresh air — not only does it offer benefits to blood pressure, energy levels and immune system, but it can also help cut back on screen time and the inevitable doomscrolling that comes from constantly refreshing social media feeds.

Committing yourself to a mental and physical reset will undoubtedly pay dividends further down the line. On behalf of the Canada Safety Council, I wish you a happy, healthy and active Spring!

***Make Safety a Priority!***

## Spring Flooding (continued from page 1)

### Dispose of contaminated household items

- Remove and discard water-soaked flooring.
- Remove finished walls completely if the water level caused the walls to be wet or humid for 48 hours or more.
- Dispose of furniture and household items that have been exposed to flood water and cannot be dried.

### Clean and dry out the house and salvageable possessions

- To prevent mould growth, after cleaning, ventilate and dehumidify the house until it is dry. Indoor humidity should be between 30 and 50 per cent.
- Speed up the drying process with fans. If weather permits, open doors and windows.
- Vacuum dried surfaces with a high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) vacuum cleaner.

### Avoid carbon monoxide poisoning

- Make sure there is a working carbon monoxide alarm installed, especially when drying out your house.
- Carbon monoxide can build up quickly if fuel-powered equipment (such as a pump or generator) is used in a poorly ventilated area. Do not use equipment indoors if it is designed only for outdoor use.

Remember, move fast. Your house and furnishings are less likely to grow mould if they are dried within 48 hours.

## Looking Ahead

As winter fades into spring, we remain busy as ever at the Canada Safety Council! The return of nice weather also means an increase in our offered Gearing Up motorcycle training courses across Canada, as well as a renewed focus on off-road vehicle training including ATVs, UTVs and amphibious ARGO machines.

March 14-20 was National Farm Safety Week and, to mark the campaign, CSC placed the focus on the importance of looking after a farm's greatest asset: its workers. A farm is only as productive as its workforce, and injuries lead to a reduction in productivity — to say nothing, of course, of the physical and mental toll taken on the person who is injured. We offered tips on keeping workers safe and establishing a safety plan.

Coming up, we've got two campaigns in the offing — National Summer Safety Week, May 1-7, where we'll be discussing the severe ramifications of leaving a child in a hot car, and National Road Safety Week, May 17-23, where we'll be shining a light on public opinion regarding driver safety technology.

Outside these items, we're also hard at work perfecting Elmer the Safety Elephant's Vaccination Education and Awareness program, analyzing data to establish a baseline for speed trends through the COVID-19 pandemic, and planning innovative and cutting-edge ways to deliver our widely recognized safety training.



## How to Stay Safe During your Next Road Trip

(NC) Feeling housebound and restless from the pandemic? A road trip may be just what you need. It's the perfect opportunity to explore places closer to home that you may not have considered otherwise.

Plus, the feeling you'll get on the open road, listening to your favourite music and enjoying the sights, will surely give you a lift. Before heading out, here are some tips to make your trip as smooth as possible:

### Plan your route

First, decide where you want to go and any attractions you'd like to see along the way. Plan your route accordingly, taking into consideration gas or recharging stations, rest stops and dining options. Get tickets or make reservations ahead of time for any attractions, restaurants or hotels you'd like to visit to ensure availability. Before setting off, check the weather forecasts, as well as road closures or any restrictions along your planned route.

### Car maintenance

Before embarking on a road trip, ensure your car is in top shape. You'll want to check that your tires are in good condition, there are no unusual noises while braking,

fluid levels are normal, the wipers are working and that everything is in good order.

This is also a good time to familiarize yourself with the driver assistance features of your car. From blind-spot warnings to cameras, sensors and adaptive cruise control, these features are a great aid. But it's important to know how they will warn you or intervene, and also when they might not work properly, like in bad weather or with poor visibility. Transport Canada recommends reviewing these features in the owner's manual or on the manufacturer's website.

### Communicate

Let family and friends know the route you're taking, as well as your destination and the timeline for your trip. Stay in contact throughout the road trip, sending quick updates as you stop at different landmarks or attractions.

### Vehicle Safety Kit

Consider keeping a vehicle safety kit in your vehicle that may include first aid items, food, tools, flares, reflective safety items, and provisions that can keep you warm. Kits can be purchased at retailers.



## Wildfire smoke: What you need to know

(NC) Wildfire smoke is a complex mixture of gases, particles and water vapour that can harm your health. Smoke can impact your health even at very low levels. Some people are at a higher risk of health problems when exposed, including seniors, people with an existing illness, pregnant people, young children and those who work outdoors.

What should you do?

The best way to protect your health is to reduce your exposure. If you're indoors and at home, be sure to follow these steps:

- Keep windows and doors closed and properly sealed. Make sure the temperature in your home remains comfortable by using air conditioning or finding other ways to keep cool.
- Use recirculation settings on your HVAC system to prevent smoke from entering your home.
- Use a clean, good quality air filter (for example, HEPA) in your ventilation system.
- Use an air purifier that uses HEPA filtration to help remove smoke from areas of your home.
- Drink lots of water to help your body cope with the smoke.
- Limit the use of kitchen and bathroom exhaust fans when you're not cooking.
- Reduce other sources of indoor air pollution. Avoid smoking and burning wood, candles or incense. Don't use home improvement or cleaning products that emit high levels of pollutants.



- Install and maintain at least one carbon monoxide alarm per floor, preferably near bedrooms.

Consider visiting community centres, libraries and shopping malls that have been identified as cleaner air spaces in your community. These places may have cooler, cleaner filtered air and can provide a break from the smoke. Please be sure to respect the guidance on physical distancing from the local authorities.

Pay attention to the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI), special air quality statements or other indicators of smoke levels in your community. If necessary, limit outdoor activity and strenuous physical activities. If you have difficulty breathing, stop non-essential activities altogether.

If you need to work outdoors, check with your local occupational health and safety organization or your health authority. They can provide guidance on how to work more safely outdoors.

It's not unusual to feel anxious, stressed, sad or isolated during a smoke event, so don't forget to take care of your mental health. Eating well, getting enough sleep, exercising and staying in contact with friends can help. If you're having trouble coping, seek help from a healthcare provider.

Learn more at [airhealth.ca](http://airhealth.ca).

## e-Learning Courses

*Interested in finding out more about the e-learning courses we offer?*

Take a look at our [Top Five Safety Awareness Training Courses](#) to find out more about how you can bring our state-of-the-art online training on a wide variety of safety topics into your workplace safety plan.

## Why You Need to Test Your Home's Radon Levels

(NC) The COVID-19 pandemic is shaping our lives in countless ways. For many of us, it's meant spending more time at home this past year than ever before.

Even as we stay inside to keep ourselves and our family safe from COVID, clocking so many hours at home means we may be unwittingly exposing ourselves to another danger: radon gas.

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that comes from uranium in the ground.

You can't see it or smell it, but it's there. Whether your home is newly built or has been around for centuries it has some radon gas in it, the question is how much?

Long-term exposure to high levels of radon gas increases your risk of developing lung cancer. In fact, it's the number one cause of lung cancer in non-smokers, and in Canada

it's estimated that more than 3000 deaths a year are from radon-induced lung cancer.


The only way to know the radon level in your home is to do a simple and inexpensive test. Testing can be done by purchasing a do-it-yourself test kit or hire a certified measurement professional.

If you do have a high level of radon it can be easily fixed. Radon reduction techniques are safe, effective and have a reasonable cost.

A radon mitigation system can be installed in less than a day and in most homes will reduce the radon level by more than 80 per cent for about the same cost as other common home repairs such as replacing the furnace or air conditioner.

While you keep safe from COVID-19, don't expose yourself to other hazards. Find more information at [canada.ca/radon](https://canada.ca/radon).

*Do you have a safety story, tip or pet-peeve to share?  
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