Coming Home

Steps to Stay Safe as You Return Home

Prepare for your return: Bring the right supplies and drive carefully. Do a home safety inspection and make a cleanup plan. Know common cleanup dangers and be aware of other dangers.

Prepare for your return
• Go home only after authorities say it is safe.
• Call the power and gas company to find out if services are available in your area.
• Let family or friends know you are returning home.
• Make sure you have had a tetanus shot in the past 10 years.

Drive carefully
• Do not drive through floodwaters or over downed power lines.
• Traffic lights may be out, and street signs may be turned or gone.
• Stop at all intersections, and have a full tank of gas.

Bring the right supplies — check them off
• Lots of bottled drinking water and some sports drinks
• Food that does not have to be kept cold
• Flashlight with extra batteries
• First-aid kit
• Battery-operated radio
• Waterproof boots or waders
• Safety gear: work gloves, safety goggles, a hard hat and hard-soled boots or shoes
• N-95 face masks (available at hardware stores)
• Camera or video camera to record damage
• Hand tools: hammer, saw, screwdriver, crowbar, crescent wrench, pliers, etc.
• Trash bags and cleaning supplies
• Cell phone
Do a home safety inspection

- Do not enter your house if it is damaged extensively or if you think it may fall down.
- If water surrounds your house, do not enter it.
- Check outside for loose power lines and gas leaks; call the power company if you find any before entering.
- Turn off the power before entering a flooded home or building. Do not turn off the power if you are standing in water.
- Proceed carefully. Floors may be slippery or have holes, ceilings and tall furniture may fall.
- Open all doors and windows as soon as you enter the structure, then exit the building and do not reenter until it has aired out for 30 minutes.
- Check for broken water pipes.
- Have a reputable contractor inspect your roof.
- Check trees for broken branches and leaning trunks.