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POST FLOOD DAMAGE CLEAN-UP & REPAIRS

DPS & MEMA Offer Tips to Safely Respond

The Massachusetts Department of Public Safety (DPS), in conjunction with the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), is providing important information to homeowners and business owners to safely respond to the widespread flood damage.

“The recent rainstorms have affected many properties throughout the Commonwealth,” stated DPS Commissioner Thomas G. Gatzunis. “As cleanup efforts begin, please keep the following important information in mind.”

- **Consult a professional.**

Do not attempt to perform work for which you are not qualified. It is usually best to confer with a licensed construction supervisor, plumber or electrician prior to beginning any significant work following a flood event. Consulting with appropriate professionals at the start can often save time, money and headaches in the long run.

Licensed construction supervisors are typically required for structural or building-related work, such as framing, foundation, interior or exterior sheathing, windows, and roofing or siding work. Licensed oil burner technicians are required when work is performed on oil burning heating systems and, of course, plumbing and electrical professionals are often needed for fixture and equipment installations and related work.

You may verify the currency of a construction supervisor or oil burner technician license by visiting the Department of Public Safety’s website @ www.mass.gov/dps and click on the ***DPS License Lookup*** icon.

You may check a plumbing and/or electrical license by visiting the Division of Professional Licensure website @ www.mass.gov/dpl License information may be accessed under On-line Services on the right side of the main webpage.

The specific link is <http://license.reg.state.ma.us/public/licque.asp?color=blue>.

- **Secure all necessary permits before beginning work.**

Flood waters can damage a building’s structure, cause mold and other moisture related problems, damage electrical equipment and fixtures, and adversely affect other building components. Aside from general clean-ups efforts, most work will require the issuance of a building, electric

and/or plumbing permit. Some municipalities have agreed to waive fees for permits issued for flood clean-up efforts.

If you are not sure whether or not a permit is required, call the building inspector in the city\town in which the work is to be performed. Licensed professionals can also help explain when permits are necessary. Also, call the municipal inspector's office to determine whether any concessions have been made with regard to permit fees.

- **Make sure all work is inspected.**

State regulations specify that building construction as well as plumbing and electrical work, requires inspection by the appropriate municipal inspector. Municipal inspectors help assure that work is performed in accordance with relevant codes and standards, is done well and completely, and results in a safe environment to occupy or re-occupy. As work progresses, make sure that building foundation, structure and related work is inspected by the municipal building inspector; that all plumbing work is inspected by the municipal plumbing inspector and any electrical work (including the installation of electric appliances and\or fixtures) is inspected by the municipal inspector of wires. It is best to ensure that all work is appropriately before final payment is made to contractors and\or subcontractors involved with the project.

Remember, work that is performed improperly can cause difficulties in the future; particularly mold remediation. Water that is absorbed into porous surfaces, such as carpets, gypsum wallboard and even wood, needs to be appropriately cleaned, disinfected and\or removed. Water-soaked materials that are left in place without proper treatment can cause molds to grow. Molds can reproduce on almost any surface, including; wood, ceiling tiles, wallpaper, paints, carpet, sheet rock, and insulation. The best way to control mold spread is to keep your home dry.

- **Document all work.**

Accurate record keeping is important in any line of work; it is particularly important to keep accurate records when repairing storm-related damages. Most insurance companies will want to see proof that permits were secured, inspections were made and necessary forms were completed prior to paying a claim. Accordingly, keep copies of all permit applications and permit cards, plans and any other relevant material as you pursue the clean-up and recovery process.

- **Do not be afraid to ask questions and seek guidance.**

There are many government and private institutions offer guidance and help deal with the aftermath of a flood, including:

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) - for general guidance with clean-up efforts including the attached document titled Drying-out Your Home. <http://www.fema.gov/>. Also, FEMA has established a specific disaster relief website that may be accessed at <http://www.disasterrelief.com/>.

Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency – for specific guidance as to available services here in Massachusetts www.mass.gov/mema

Massachusetts Department of Public Health – for guidance on mold remediation and health issues www.mass.gov/dph.

Remember to consult with appropriate government agencies and licensed professionals to help guide the process and ease the burden of your clean-up and repair efforts.