



Safety Awareness for Responders to Hurricanes:

# Protecting Yourself While Helping Others



September 2008

## Safety and Health Precautions

For people working in hurricane damaged or flooded areas

- **General personal protective equipment** - Wear steel-toed boots, heavy-duty work gloves, and goggles/safety glasses with side shields. If there's danger of falling debris, wear an ANSI-approved hard hat. Wear a long sleeve shirt, long pants, or coveralls. If you are in an area where you must shout to be heard, use hearing protection such as ear plugs or landscaper's ear muffs. Apply mosquito repellent.
- **Respirator** - People who enter previously flooded buildings should wear an N95 respirator (charcoal-impregnated advised to minimize unpleasant odors) over your nose and mouth if there is potential for splashes, airborne dusts, or mold. Mold is probably present in buildings that were flooded.
- **Decontamination of equipment and clothing** - Wash gear with warm soapy water. Clothing can be washed normally in a household washer.
- **Personal Hygiene** - Wash your hands often. Wash your body with soap and warm drinkable water. Shower daily or as needed.
- **Pay special attention to not putting your hands in your mouth** or on objects that could go into your mouth such as cigarettes or water bottles. Clean cuts and abrasions thoroughly with soap and water and apply antibiotic ointment.
- **Prevent heat stress** - Drink lots of water or a mix of ½ sports drink & ½ water. Avoid soda, alcohol, and coffee and tea. If possible, do the heaviest work early in the morning 6:00 AM - 11:00 AM and later in the afternoon 3:00 PM - 7:30 PM. Take frequent rest breaks. Eat light meals. Avoid direct sun. Wear a hat, sunscreen and loose fitting clothes.
- It is recommended that you **notify your supervisor if you have any health or medical conditions**, such as high blood pressure, heart condition, or allergies.

**For further information, contact:**



**Note:**

Additional recommendations on safety precautions for workers can be found at:

**The National Clearinghouse for Worker Safety and Health Training:**

<http://tools.niehs.nih.gov/wetp/index.cfm?id=2472>

**The Centers for Disease Control:**

<http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/>

**OSHA:** <http://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/hurricaneRecovery.html>