

Flooded Septic Systems And Water Supply Safety

1. If you have raw sewage or sewage contaminated water in your basement, wear protective boots and gloves when entering the area. Ensure that no electrical hazards exist before entering flooded or water damaged areas. Contact your electric utility immediately if you have questions or concerns regarding electrical hazards.
2. If your septic system is still functional, you can maintain the system longer by minimizing water usage from toilet flushing, showering and clothes washing.
3. If the septic system has failed, it may not be beneficial to use the technique “PUMP AND HAUL”. This method of treatment might damage or collapse your septic system. Contact your local health department or zoning agency if you have questions.
4. Portable facilities can be used if your septic system has failed. You can use a variety of portable methods; however, care must be taken in the disposal of waste. Waste should be taken to an approved “dumping station” or sewage treatment facility.
5. If your septic system has failed, it is important to check your private well water closely. If there is any change in taste, odors, or color, discontinue drinking immediately. If there is sheen on standing water or a gasoline smell, this may indicate contamination as well. All private wells should be tested for bacteria. Contact your local health department for information and assistance.
6. Do not pump your basement water into the sanitary sewer or a septic system, which is already overloaded. Pump out to grade if possible. If gasoline pumps or generators are used, take precautions to ensure proper use and ventilation to avoid exposure to carbon monoxide. If electric pumps are used, be mindful that electrical hazards may exist due to standing water or damp environments.