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 drink
- 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 like 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
Make a cleanup plan

- Contact your insurance agent and mortgage lender
- Photograph or videotape the damage to your home
- Plan to do only what you can safely do
- Hire professionals to repair roof, wiring, walls, and appliances and to cut down damaged trees

Cleanup Dangers

**Electrical dangers**

- Be sure the main electric power and all circuit breakers are off
- Have the electrical wiring inspected before turning on the main power
- Clean and dry appliances before turning them on
- Do not use electrical tools or appliances while standing in water

**Carbon monoxide (CO)**

- CO is an odorless, colorless gas that can kill you within minutes
- Never use generators, pressure washers, or other gas-powered tools inside your home
- Keep generators and other engines outside and away from windows and vents
- Have the gas company turn on the gas — do not do it yourself
- Know the signs of CO poisoning: headache, fatigue, nausea, dizziness, vomiting, loss of consciousness

**Falls**

- Falls from ladders and roofs can cause broken bones and death
- Put ladders on flat, solid ground and have a helper hold the base
- Do not stand on the top two rungs
- Use a ladder that reaches at least three feet above the roof edge
- Be careful on your roof — shingles and plastic sheeting can be very slippery

**Chainsaws**

- Chainsaws are very dangerous
- Use a hand saw for small jobs
- Wear cut-proof chainsaw pants, gloves, and goggles/face shield
- Hold the chainsaw with two hands
- Do not cut with the tip of the chainsaw
- Never cut above chest height or while on a ladder
- Hire a tree trimmer to cut down large branches and trees

**Cleaning products**

- Always wear rubber gloves and boots while using cleaning products
- Never mix bleach and ammonia or other cleaning products
- If you splash cleaning product on your skin or eyes, rinse with plenty of bottled water

**Mold**

- A mold problem can usually be seen or smelled
- Mold growth may often appear as slightly furry, discolored, or slimy patches that increase in size as they grow
- To find mold, it may be necessary to look behind and underneath surfaces, such as carpets, wallpaper, cabinets, and walls
- Mold can cause health effects in some people. The most common effects are allergic responses from breathing mold spores, however; some people can suffer from infections and toxic effects from mold exposure

**Mold Cleanup**

- Wear an N-95 face mask when working around mold
- Control the moisture problem by opening windows and using a de-humidifier
- Porous materials with extensive mold growth should be discarded such as drywall, capeting, paper, and ceiling tiles
- All wet materials must be thoroughly dried. If that is not possible, items should be discarded
- Mold growing on hard surfaces can be cleaned. Small areas can be scrubbed with a cleaning rag wetted with dilute detergent. For a large mold problem, an experienced professional should do the work
- Continue to monitor the area for new mold growth and signs of moisture.

**Other concerns**

- Get help lifting heavy things to avoid back strains
- Protect yourself from insects: Use products with DEET or Picaridin on skin and clothing
- Deep cuts and puncture wounds may become infected. See a doctor!
- Drink plenty of bottled water and rest frequently

Information for this fact sheet was developed by the CDC and EPA. For additional information:
http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/emres/flood.html
http://www.epa.gov/naturaldisasters/flooding.html