



Steps to Take After a Flood, Fire or Other Natural Disaster

When a disaster damages or destroys your home or neighborhood, so much changes. Whether it's a flood, fire, hurricane, tornado or earthquake, recovery can be a challenge. But to begin getting your home, your community and your life back to normal, you can:

- Create a plan for recovery
- Check in with your unit
- Stay alert and stay safe

Your safety, along with your mental and physical well-being, is the most important thing after a disaster or emergency situation. Make the process less stressful by having a recovery plan in place.

Here are a few things you can do after disaster strikes:

- **Check on those around you.** After you make sure your family is OK, check on neighbors and people who may have been alone; especially the elderly and disabled, and children. If anyone is injured, weak, or in distress, help them get medical attention.
- **Find a safe place to stay.** The [Federal Emergency Management Agency](#) can provide housing assistance if your home was damaged or destroyed. Call 800-462-9029 for assistance. You should also look for volunteers with the [American Red Cross](#), which helps provide shelter for people in disaster situations.
- **Check in with your command.** Following certain catastrophic events, the secretary of defense may direct all Department of Defense-affiliated people in an affected area to check in. If you can use the internet, check in online through using the [Army Disaster Personnel Accountability and Assessment System](#), [Marine Online](#), the [Navy Family Accountability and Assessment System](#) or the [Air Force Personnel Accountability and Assessment System](#). If the internet is down, you can check in over the phone. Army service members should call 800-833-6622; Marine Corps members should call 816-394-7232; Navy service members should call 877-414-5358; and Air Force service members should call 800-435-9941.
- **Be safe, inside and outside your home.** If your home has been damaged, your power lines and gas lines may have sustained damage also. Turn off your gas and electricity if you can do so safely. Report any downed power lines or broken gas lines right away. Avoid puddles and other standing water outside as you could get a shock from underground or downed power lines. If you see any wires on the ground, assume all are dangerous including cable TV lines. Also watch out for leaking gas lines and propane containers, gasoline that has leaked from vehicles and lighter fluid or paint thinner that has spilled. When you're out, stay alert as structures that are still standing may fall in on you or collapse under you.
- **Provide ventilation for fuel-burning devices.** If you are using kerosene lamps, wood stoves, fireplaces, gas-powered pumps or generators, provide plenty of ventilation in the area so that carbon monoxide does not build up. Carbon monoxide is an invisible, odorless gas, and it can be deadly. It is best not to use certain carbon monoxide-producing devices indoors, but if you have no other choice, be sure and watch people around you for symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning, which include: mild headaches that persist or get worse, shortness of breath, irritability, poor judgment, memory loss and rapid fatigue. If any of these symptoms occur in people around you, seek medical attention immediately.
- **Stay informed.** Depending on the disaster, radio and TV reports may provide news through the emergency alert system. This system, along with news or government agencies' social media sites, can provide information about what to do, where to go and how to contact local disaster relief services.

Disasters can be upsetting experiences for everyone involved. Reach out to Military OneSource online or by phone, at 800-342-9647 if you are, or someone in your family is, experiencing issues with disaster-related stress.

