



Recovering from a Disaster

Recovering from a disaster can be a slow process. Returning home, cleaning up, and repairing damage can be challenging and stressful. Personal safety and mental and physical well-being are primary concerns, and loss of property and money are also important. You should file insurance claims as soon as possible and know what to expect to reduce uncertainty. If help is available, knowing how to find it makes the process faster and less stressful.

Health and Safety Guidelines

Be sure to follow safety guidelines after a disaster and pay attention to your health. During disaster cleanup, beware of exhaustion. Do not try to do too much at once: set priorities, pace yourself, and take breaks for rest. Drink plenty of clean water and eat well. Wear sturdy work boots and gloves and wash your hands thoroughly with soap and clean water often when working in debris.

Be aware of new safety issues created by the disaster. Look for washed-out roads, contaminated buildings, contaminated water, gas leaks, broken glass, damaged electrical wiring, and slippery surfaces. Let local authorities know about health and safety issues, including chemical spills, downed power lines, washed-out roads, smoldering insulation, and dead animals.

Returning Home



Be careful and plan ahead when returning home after a disaster. To stay safe, **wait until local authorities say it is OK to return.**

The first thing that you should do after returning home is contact your insurance company. Take pictures and videos of damage and keep accurate records of repair and cleaning costs. For more information about coming back home, visit [Ready.gov/returning-home](https://www.ready.gov/returning-home).