



ELECTRICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR REPAIRS AFTER FLOODING

1. **IF PANELS AND METERING EQUIPMENT ARE SUBMERGED**
A licensed electrical contractor needs to make repairs after permitting the job. (The water that is on this equipment contains impurities that can cause the insulation to fail causing a dangerous condition if power is restored). At that point the contractor will assume responsibility for the power restoration; a Temporary Power inspection should be scheduled. At this point we will inspect and send approval to the power company. A final inspection will assure that all items are working properly after the power is on.

2. **THE INDOOR ELECTRICAL WIRING IF WALLS ARE WET**
A licensed electrical contractor needs to permit the job. After the drywall is removed we need to see the new NM Cable an electrical contractor has installed, this will be a Rough Inspection. After the devices are installed a final inspection should be performed to assure safety. Any new devices will need to be tamper resistant and the installation should meet the 2008 NEC requirements.

3. **THERE HAS NOT BEEN ANY WATER IN THE HOUSE**
 - a. If the power is turned off as a precaution by the Power Company, and there is no damage to any portion, we will allow the homeowner to obtain a permit to restore power. We will look at the meter, the panel, the grounding, check for unsafe conditions and then give permission to the power company to restore power.

 - b. If there is damage due to trees or other objects on the incoming power connections to the house, a licensed electrical contractor will be required to take out a permit and follow the procedures for repairs to a service.



DeKalb County Cooperative Extension

SAFETY TIPS FOR USING A PORTABLE GENERATOR

A portable generator may seem like a life-saving device when you lose electrical power, but it can also become a life-threatening device when not used properly. The dangers include carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning, electrical shocks and fire. Below are some tips to protect you and your family.

Tip 1. Purchase a portable generator that meets your family's power needs. Decide what appliances are necessities and then calculate the wattage needed to run the appliance along with the extra wattage required to start each appliance. Running wattage is also called "rated watts" and can be found on the appliance nameplate. Starting wattage is usually two to seven times greater than the running wattage.

Tip 2. Use it safely. Place the unit outdoors, away from any enclosed space such as a garage or carport, and away from doors, windows and vents. You want to keep the CO away from your home. CO is a byproduct of the exhaust from the generator and exposure to a high concentration of CO can cause unconsciousness and even death. Did you know that one portable generator can produce as much CO as hundreds of running automobiles?

Tip 3. Be aware of the signs of CO poisoning. You cannot smell or see CO, so if you start feeling dizzy, weak or sick, get fresh air immediately. For extra protection, install CO alarms that are either battery-operated, or use a battery backup.

Tip 4. Guard against shock and electrocution. To reduce electrical risks, place the generator on a flat surface under a tarp or canopy to keep it dry and allow air circulation. The electrical switch should be placed in a watertight box and grounded. In addition, you should not plug the extension cord running from the portable generator into an outlet in the house. This causes the electricity to flow backwards and could electrocute someone in the house or in a nearby house that is served by the same transformer. This is known as backfeeding. If the generator must be connected to your house wiring, have it done by a qualified electrician.

Tip 5. Reduce fire risk. Store fuel for the generator in an approved safety can outside of living areas and away from fuel burning appliances like a gas water heater. If you spill any fuel, clean it up immediately and never add fuel to a hot generator. Gasoline that is spilled on a hot generator can catch fire.

To learn more about portable generators link to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission fact sheet.

<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/portgen.pdf>



DeKalb County Cooperative Extension

MOLD CLEANUP AFTER A FLOOD

Periods of heavy rain and flooding in hot humid climates produce an explosion of mold. Molds produce spores that spread through the air and form new mold growths or colonies when the conditions are right, that is when there is moisture, nutrients (nearly anything organic) and a place to grow.

Mold can damage items in your home and impact your health. The longer you allow mold to grow, the greater the risk and the harder the cleanup. As soon as you are able to return home, start cleaning up and drying things out.

Generally, you do not need to test mold. It is better to spend your money and effort on cleaning up the mold. If you have health concerns or mold is spread throughout your home, consider hiring a reputable firm that is trained in dealing with water damage and mold remediation. There are no licensing requirements in Georgia so shop carefully, obtain written quotes and don't pay in advance of the work being performed.

You may have to do the cleanup yourself. If so, follow the steps below.

Take an inventory. If you have insurance coverage, compile a room-by-room inventory of missing or damaged goods, including manufacturer's names, dates and places of purchases and prices. Take photographs to document damages.

Dry all wet materials quickly. If possible, use air conditioning or heat with fans and dehumidifiers. If you have no power and can get access to a generator, run a dehumidifier indoors to help remove moisture from the air. New mold colonies can form in as little as 3 days if materials stay wet. Wood and other materials that look dry can still be wet enough to support re-growth.

Minimize your exposure during cleanup. Reduce your skin exposure by wearing gloves, long sleeves, long pants and sturdy shoes. To avoid breathing spores or fragments, wear a mask or N95 respirator. To help protect your eyes wear goggles.

Remove and discard moldy materials. It is best to throw out porous materials that were exposed to water. This includes carpeting, carpet pads, paper products, gypsum wallboard, insulation and plaster. These items should be covered with plastic and removed from the house. Cut away the wet wallboard and remove damp insulation. Let the area dry before sealing the wall cavity or you may have future mold problems. You



DeKalb County Cooperative Extension

ELECTRICAL HAZARDS AND FLOODS

Electricity and water do not mix. After a flood, you need to be careful to avoid electrical hazards in your home. Below are some tips to help when you return to your home after the flood waters have subsided.

- Never touch fallen power lines. Call the power company to report fallen lines.
- If electrical circuits or equipment got wet or are still in the water, turn off the power at the main breaker or fuse on the service panel.
- Never turn the power off while standing in water and do not walk through standing water to access the main power switch. Call an electrician to turn it off.
- Inspect refrigerators, freezers, stoves, washing machines, water heaters, televisions and other electrical equipment that got wet. These items need to be dried out completely and inspected by an electrician or competent service person before using them. Some items may need to be discarded.
- Remove the covers on electrical outlets and switches that were under water. This will help to dry out the wall cavity. A better option is to cut away the wall board and remove the insulation in the areas that were flooded. Before using outlets and switches have them inspected by an electrician.
- If you see frayed wiring or sparks when you restore power, or if there is an odor of something burning but no visible fire, you should immediately shut off the electrical system at the main circuit breaker.
- If you are unsure what to do, contact an electrician or the local utility company. Always remember to be careful around electricity.



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AFTER THE FLOOD: WELLS AND SEPTIC TANKS

When the flood waters subside it is safest to assume your well water is not safe to drink. Contact your local health department or county extension office to test your well water. If your well is contaminated you need to disinfect it. A commonly used process is called shock chlorination that uses chlorine to treat bacterial contamination.

Do not use the septic system until the water in the absorption field is lower than the water level around the house. The system should be professionally inspected and serviced if you suspect damage. If any sewage backed up into your basement, be sure to clean and disinfect the area. You can use a solution of one-half cup of chlorine bleach to each gallon of water. Wear rubber boots, rubber gloves, long pants and a long sleeved shirt to clean. Wash these clothes separately from other clothing.

For more information contact your local health department or county extension office at (404) 298-4080.

GEORGIA STATE LICENSING BOARD FOR RESIDENTIAL AND GENERAL CONTRACTORS

TIPS FOR CONSUMERS

Whether you are building a home, a commercial building, or considering some other type of construction that would require the use of a residential or general contractor, it is important to understand how to best acquire these services and to have knowledge about potential scam artists who may try to take advantage of you.

The Georgia General Assembly enacted legislation to help protect consumers by requiring that certain types of residential and general contractors obtain a license. This law became effective on July 1, 2008. This law, O.C.G.A. § 43-41, may be found on the Board's website at www.sos.ga.gov/plb/contractors. This law requires that contractors prove that they have met minimum professional standards in order to be licensed in Georgia. While the law allowed for an initial exam exemption period for those contractors who could prove their qualifications and financial requirements, contractors must pass a two part written exam prior to obtaining a Georgia license.

The following are some tips for hiring a qualified contractor for your project(s):

1. Verify that the person is properly licensed by visiting our website at <https://secure.sos.state.ga.us/myverification/>. You may search by name or by license number.
2. Get recommendations from friends and neighbors and check any references given to you by a prospective contractor. You may want to check with your local building permitting official to verify that this person's work history in your community has been favorable.
3. Ask the contractor for proof of general liability insurance. The contractor may also be required to maintain worker's compensation insurance depending on the number of employees that he/she has and other factors. The name on the insurance should correspond with the name of the licensed individual or business.
4. Obtain a written contract for all work that includes specific details of the work to be done, materials to be used and final clean-up to be done when the project has been completed. The contract should include a completion date and payment schedule.
5. Georgia law and board rules require that new single family residences be given a written warranty. Board rules outline the minimum requirements for a written warranty. These rules may be found at www.sos.ga.gov/plb/contractors.
6. Never pay the entire cost of a project up before the work is complete.
7. Georgia law does allow an individual to obtain a building permit to build his/her own home or building, and the law outlines under what circumstances this may be done (*See O.C.G.A. § 43-41-17*).

Advice to Consumers for After the Emergency

Listen to local radio or television stations for continuing advisories on ways to help recover from the emergency. Here is more advice to follow after an emergency:

- Use extreme caution when entering buildings that may have been damaged by the disaster. Buildings can collapse without warning.
- Check for leaking gas pipes in your home. Do this by Smell Only -- don't use matches or candles. If you smell gas 1) immediately open windows and doors; 2) turn off the main gas valve; 3) leave the house; 4) go to another location and notify the gas company and/or fire department. Don't re-enter the house until you are told it is safe to do so.
- If any of your electrical appliances are wet, first turn off the main power switch in your house, then unplug the wet appliances, dry them out, and check for visible damage. If none, reconnect the appliances and turn on the main power switch. CAUTION --Don't do any of these things while you are wet or standing in water. If fuses blow when power is restored, turn off the main power switch again and then inspect for short circuits in your home wiring, appliances, and equipment. Call the utility company for help.
- Use only battery-powered lanterns or flashlights to examine your home for damage, as flammables may be inside.
- Check food and water supplies before using them. Foods that require refrigeration may be spoiled if electric power has been off for some time. Don't eat fresh food that has come in contact with flood water. Be sure to follow the broadcasted instructions concerning the use of food and water supplies.
- Check to see that sewage lines are intact before flushing toilets.
- Report damaged water, sewage, and gas lines to the proper authorities.
- If you must use your car, drive carefully along streets and avoid debris. Avoid loose, dangling, or broken wires, and report them to the fire department or utility company.
- Don't visit the disaster area, as you may hamper rescue efforts.
- Notify your insurance agent or broker if your property was damaged.



Rep. Johnson outlines federal, local resources for flood victims

DECATUR, GA. SEPTEMBER 28, 2009

FLOOD ASSISTANCE – Families or businesses affected by the flooding, can now receive FEMA help with housing, home repairs, small business loans, disaster unemployment assistance and special tax considerations.

For more on FEMA's disaster assistance, go to their Web site at: (www.fema.gov/assistance/index.shtm). **To reach FEMA by phone, call 1-800-621-3362 or 1-800-462-7585 (TTY) for the hearing and speech impaired. The toll-free telephone numbers will operate from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Sunday.**

A state of emergency was requested in 17 counties last week due to the heavy rains and flooding, including all three in the Fourth – DeKalb, Rockdale and Gwinnett. More than 1,000 sandbags were deployed in Rockdale and dozens of roads closed in all three counties as the rain continued throughout the week. Hundreds of homes and families within Georgia's Fourth Congressional District are confirmed to have sustained damage. Low-interest loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration also will be available to cover some losses not fully compensated by insurance.

EMERGENCY SHELTER – If you or someone you know needs immediate shelter or has questions, they are asked to call their local emergency management agency.

DeKalb County :DeKalb County Emergency Management Agency

770- 270-0413,

Rockdale County: Conyers-Rockdale County Emergency Management Agency 770-918-6717

Gwinnett County: Gwinnett County Homeland Security Emergency Management Agency at 770-513-5240.

You can also receive help from the **American Red Cross online at**

(www.redcrossatlanta.org) or by calling 404-575-3730.

CLEAN UP – For clean up assistance, FEMA can also help in dealing with debris: **Call 1-800-621-3362.**

If you need further assistance, please contact my District offices at **770-987-2291** or **770-939-2016** or my website www.hankjohnson.house.gov Use caution, be safe and let other folks who did not attend this meeting know about the important emergency information!