

April 17th, 2026

Unofficial translation

AFTER A FLOOD

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE OUTAOUAIS PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Check that your home is safe

Before returning to your home, make sure it is safe. Several signs can help you identify a weakened structure: cracked ceilings, sagging floors, doors that no longer close, etc. If in doubt, it is best to call a professional specializing in building structures.

Cleanup and Repair Work

Take the following precautions before starting to clean your home and property:

- Pump out the water and remove damaged materials. To avoid contracting an infection, it is recommended to wear appropriate equipment (protective eyewear, gloves, mask, and boots);

- Clean and completely dry all water damage within 24 to 48 hours. Beyond this timeframe, mold may develop.

Septic Systems

If wastewater has backed up into your basement, clean the affected area and disinfect the soil.

Avoid using your septic system if the ground is still flooded.

As soon as the ground is no longer flooded or saturated with water:

- Have your septic tank, holding tanks, and pumping station (if applicable) pumped as soon as possible. Refill your septic tank with water;

- Ensure that access covers are secure and that inspection ports have not been blocked or damaged;

- If you have a treatment system certified NQ 3680-910, follow the recommendations of the manufacturer, their representative, or the professional who maintains it;

- Before restoring power, inspect all electrical connections for damage. Ensure that the equipment is clean and dry.

- Repair any damage to the vegetation;

- Have your septic system inspected by a qualified professional if you suspect any damage or malfunction;

- Do not drive over your septic system with a vehicle (at any time).

2. Water Consumption

Check if the water is potable, that is, safe for consumption. If you have any doubts about the color, odor, or taste of the water, contact the municipal authorities before consuming it.

Consider water from a private well as non-potable, that is, unfit for consumption.

Disinfect your private well and have your well water tested before consuming it.

3. Food and Medications

Following a flood, sort and select any food that has come into contact with water to prevent food poisoning. After a power outage of more than six hours, check the quality of your food before consuming it.

Learn about available psychosocial support

Pay attention to your reactions and those of your loved ones after experiencing a disaster:

- Frequent anxiety, distress, or crying;
- Lack of interest or energy;
- Aggression;
- Difficulty concentrating or confusion;
- Increased alcohol or drug use.

Psychosocial support is available. Psychosocial intervention professionals are available to support you, advise you, and direct you to resources tailored to your needs or those of your loved ones. Contact Info-Social at 811 and choose option 2 to speak with one of these professionals. This service is free and confidential, and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

For more information on health advice during a flood, please visit the Quebec government website at: <https://www.quebec.ca/securite-situations-urgence/urgences-sinistres-risques-naturels/quoi-faire-avant-pendant-a-pres-urgence-sinistre/inondation>