

Homeowner Guidance: Septic Spills During Flooding

Sewage can contain harmful bacteria, viruses and other contaminants. During a flood, private sewage systems may become overwhelmed or damaged, causing sewage to enter a home, surface on a yard, or move to ditches, water bodies or neighbouring properties. Take steps to protect people first, then report and arrange cleanup as needed.

1. Report and get advice

- [Contact Saskatchewan Health Authority Public Health Inspection](#) if a private sewage system is failing, sewage is surfacing on the property, or there is a localized public health concern.
- Call the Ministry of Environment's Spill Line if sewage is leaving your property, entering a ditch, stormwater system or water body, affecting neighbours, or may harm the environment or public health.
- If your system is part of a municipal network, contact your municipality. Municipalities should call WSA's 24-hour Upset Reporting Line: 1-844-536-9494.
- For health advice, call HealthLine 811. For life-threatening emergencies, call 911.

2. Reduce further impacts

- Minimize household water use until the system can be checked.
- Do not pump a septic tank while floodwater is high, unless directed by a qualified professional, as the tank may shift or be damaged.
- If safe, identify and stop damaged lines, pumps or other components contributing to the release.

3. Protect yourself and others

- Avoid contact with sewage-contaminated water and materials.
 - Keep children, pets and livestock away from affected areas.
 - Wear rubber boots, waterproof gloves and eye protection if cleanup is necessary.
- Wash hands well after contact with floodwater or contaminated materials.
- Throw away food, medicine, cosmetics and personal items that came in contact with sewage or floodwater.

4. Clean up safely

- Before entering a flooded building, make sure the structure and utilities are safe.
- Remove porous materials that cannot be cleaned and disinfected, such as soaked carpet, insulation, drywall, mattresses and upholstered furniture.
- Wash hard surfaces with detergent, then disinfect and dry quickly to reduce mould growth.
- Consider professional restoration or environmental cleanup help for significant sewage contamination.

Private wells: If floodwater has reached your wellhead, assume the water may be contaminated. Do not drink it until the well has been assessed, disinfected if required, and tested safe.

After floodwater recedes: Have a qualified septic contractor inspect tanks, pumps, alarms, electrical connections and disposal components before returning to normal use. Repair damaged components as soon as practical.

Key contacts and resources

Environmental and municipal reporting	Public health advice	Flood readiness and cleanup
Spill Line: 1-800-667-7525 Hazardous Spills Reporting Report sewage releases that may harm the environment or public health. WSA 24-hour Upset Reporting Line: 1-844-536-9494	HealthLine: 811 Contact local Public Health Inspection for failing private sewage works or localized health hazards. SHA Public Health Inspector contacts	SPSA emergency preparedness Includes flood preparedness and cleanup resources. Preparing and Cleaning Up After The Flood Flooding Support Contacts