



Town of Reading  
16 Lowell Street  
Reading, MA 01867-2684  
Website: [www.ci.reading.ma.us](http://www.ci.reading.ma.us)

Reading Health Division  
Phone: 781 942-6618  
Fax: 781 942-9071

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## PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

### FLOOD WATER CONTAMINATION

Exposure to flood water that maybe contaminated with sewage. The following recommendations emphasize avoiding contact with potentially contaminated flood waters and using appropriate precautions if contact is unavoidable.

If a basement or other areas have been flooded, it should be assumed that the water maybe contaminated with sewerage. The Health Division strongly advises that individuals avoid contact with any standing water if at all possible. If a person comes in contact with potentially contaminated flood water, the following recommendation /precautions should be followed:

- Keep all children and pets out of flood water
- Wear water proof boots, gloves, eye protection and clothes that are waterproof or disposable
- Make sure all gas and electrical utilities to the affected area are turned off by Electric Light Company or Gas Company before you enter flood water.
- Keep contact time with flood water at a minimum and avoid splashing
- If there is contact wash thoroughly with soap and water and launder clothes if possible

If and individual becomes ill with fever, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea after exposure to possible contaminated flood water contact your health care provider.

If you have other questions contact Reading Health Division at 781-942-9061



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16 Lowell Street  
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**HEALTH**  
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**PROCEDURES TO USE IF YOUR HOME EXPERIENCED A BACK UP OF  
SEWAGE OR FLOODING**

**Homes and Buildings**

Flooded basements should be pumped out and disinfected. After the water is pumped out, solid wastes should be disposed of in a functioning sewage disposal system. All flooded floor and wall surfaces should be washed with a solution of one capful of household bleach for each gallon of water. Any Household articles affected by flood waters should be washed with the same solution. Carpeting, mattresses and upholstered furniture should be disposed of or cleaned and disinfected by a professional cleaner. (look in the yellow pages under "Fire Restoration")

If you have any direct contact with raw sewage while cleaning and you have any open wounds, we suggest that you contact your personal physician for recommendations on any preventative procedures.

**Yards**

Yards that have been contaminated by flooded sewage systems should be disinfected by a liberal application of lime. Children and animals should be kept away from limed areas until the lime is no longer visible.

**Food**

Immersed food products should not be consumed. This applies to products that are not canned or bottled. These items are not affected but should be washed thoroughly with approved drinking water and a mild disinfecting solution and then rinsed prior to opening and use.

**The following companies will disinfect after water or sewer overflows and/or flooding.**

**Title in Yellow pages is:**

**Fire and Water Damage Restoration**

Paul Davis Systems of Eastern Massachusetts

27 Water Street

Wakefield

(781) 224-3475

ServiceMaster Absolute Cleaning

Wakefield

(781) 246-4557

Serv Pro

Medford

(781) 395-4444

## Wells

If the area over a well is under flood water, the recommended procedure for disinfection is as follows:

- Pour a solution of one gallon of water and one half gallon of three percent to six percent commercial bleach directly into the well.
- Open all faucets until there is an odor of chlorine apparent and then close all faucets for ten hours to allow the bleach to kill any bacteria present in the pipes, storage tank or well.
- Next, open all faucets and let the water run until the odor and taste of bleach have disappeared.
- Have a sample of water, taken 24 hours after disinfection, tested at a certified laboratory to determine that the water is suitable for use. A copy of a list of certified labs is available at the Health Division. (attached)

This procedure results in a high level of chlorine so the water should not be used for drinking, cooking, watering livestock or irrigation until the chlorine taste and odor are no longer apparent. Use of bottled water or boiling water is suggested if you are unsure of the purity of your well water.

## Boiling Water

If you must boil contaminated or potentially contaminated tap water, the water must be at a rolling boil for 5 minutes. (reminder: The water is hot, allow 1 hour cooling time)

## **Certified Laboratories**

**G & L laboratories**  
33 Newport Avenue  
Quincy, MA 02168  
617-328-3663

**Morrell Associates**  
P.O. box 268  
Marshfield, MA -2050  
781-837-1395  
[www.morrell-associates.com](http://www.morrell-associates.com)

**Stevens Analytical laboratories, Inc.**  
38 Montvale Avenue  
Stoneham, MA 02180  
781-438-6114

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**REGULATIONS  
TOWN OF READING  
REIMBURSEMENT FOR SEWER BACKFLOW PREVENTION**

The Town of Reading is aware that residents may have experienced sewer backup into their homes through no fault of their own, and through no fault of the Town. This type of backup generally occurs in times of heavy rainfall. The Town recognizes that there are methods that homeowners may take to prevent sewer back up in their home, and that these measures are the responsibility of the property owner and take place on private property. The Town also wishes to assist homeowners in protecting their own property from such circumstances. At its meeting on July 10, 2001, the Board of Selectmen authorized a program of 50% reimbursement for such back flow prevention systems, and these regulations implement that policy.

1. The Town will reimburse, on a one time only basis, 50% of the cost of a sewer back flow prevention system for a one or two family dwelling up to a maximum Town expenditure of \$500 per dwelling.
2. With limited funding, priority will be given to locations that have actually had a sewer back up within the past 3 years.
3. The property owner will select the method of sewer back flow prevention. The Town will not recommend, or participate in the choice of system; and will not be responsible for the system.
4. The property owner will be solely responsible for the initial installation, maintenance, operation and replacement of the back flow prevention system as needed.
5. The homeowner will be responsible for securing all building, plumbing, and other permits required to perform the work, and will present proof of the permit and inspection at the time that a request for reimbursement is made. The system must conform to the requirements of Section 2.09 (4) (a-1) of the regulations of the Board of State Examiners of Plumbers and Gas Fitters.
6. The property owner will sign a copy of these regulations acknowledging them, and will pay for the cost of filing this statement with the Register of Deeds and submit a receipted copy to the Department of Public Works for the Town's files.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Property Owner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address of Property

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Property Owner

*Adopted - 8-21-01*

### **Section 4.12 – Regulations For Reimbursement for Sewer Backflow Prevention**

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***Adopted – 8-21-01, Revised 1/05***