



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - July 3, 2019

INFORMATION, REMINDERS ON FLOOD CLEANUP AND RECOVERY FROM ST. CHARLES COUNTY GOVERNMENT AND REGIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

ST. CHARLES COUNTY, MO – Floodwaters finally are receding after reaching historic levels in numerous areas of the county. As cleanup and recovery begins, various departments and divisions of St. Charles County Government are sharing processes and tips to help residents who have been affected by the flooding. Please share this information with others who may benefit.

Building and Code Enforcement

St. Charles County's Division of Building and Code Enforcement is conducting inspections in areas affected by flooding. If you live in one of these areas, be sure to ask for proper agency identification from anyone requesting to inspect your property.

Damage Assessment Process and Permitting: Staff will first conduct an *Initial Damage Assessment* to determine if unsafe conditions exist, and to determine the amount of overall damage in the County. Letters are sent to the owners of every damaged structure noted. After the initial assessment, a *Detailed Damage Assessment* is conducted on the property and the owner is provided with a comprehensive list of concerns. These inspections are required by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and determine eligibility for relief funding that may become available if a Federal Disaster Declaration is made by the President of the U.S.

St. Charles County uses this damage assessment process to assist property owners. If you have had any water in your property, including the basement, an inspection is required. If your property needs inspection and the water is low enough that staff members can safely access all structures, please contact the Division of Building and Code Enforcement at 636-949-7345 or bce@sccmo.org. An adult over the age of 18 needs to be present during the inspection.

Please note that St. Charles County ordinances require a building permit to repair flood-damaged structures regardless of the type of work. Examples of projects requiring a building permit include drywall replacement, electrical work, siding replacement, roofing, door replacement and flooring. The St. Charles County Council recently approved the discount of certain fees for buildings and floodplain development to assist County residents recovering from property damage due to the Spring 2019 weather events. For more information, please call the number above.

Electrical, mechanical and plumbing work requires contractors be licensed with St. Charles County Government. Visit sccmo.org/ActiveContractors for a list of licensed contractors. To ensure safety and quality, the Division of Building and Code Enforcement offers the following recommendations when hiring a contractor:

- Ask family and friends for recommendations.
- Always get three bids before hiring a contractor.
- Obtain a contract from the contractor and make clear expectations of work.
- Obtain the building permit (when required) yourself or require a copy of the building permit from the contractor prior to construction.
- Do not pay upfront—instead, pay at certain milestones as work is completed.
- When work is complete, obtain a mechanic's lien waiver.
- Keep a copy of all receipts, invoices, and other documents.

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Regional Emergency Management

Emergency Management staff warn that when returning after a flood, be aware that your house or business likely will be contaminated with mold or sewage. This can cause health risks to your family or employees. Follow these tips for safety:

First Steps for Re-Entering Your Structure

- Return only when the area has been declared safe by responding officials. Keep children and pets out of the area until clean-up is complete.
- Wear protective clothing (boots, gloves, eyewear, breathing masks, etc.) when entering the structure.
- Wash hands regularly after any contact with flood water, items that may have been in flood water, and after leaving the structure.
- Be cautious of wild animals (live or dead) that may have used the structure as a refuge.
- For insurance purposes, photograph damage to your property before and after cleaning.
- If the structure has been closed for several days, open doors and windows to let the air circulate for at least 30 minutes before staying inside for any long period of time. Be alert for symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning: Headache, dizziness, nausea and confusion are a few indicators.
- Remove pooled water slowly. Pump out no more than two feet of water each day to equalize pressure inside and outside the foundation. Otherwise, walls and floors may collapse.
- Remove mud and debris from the home first. Then, scrub all areas with cleaning supplies and disinfect surfaces with a germ-killing product or chlorine bleach solution (recommended use is 1/8 teaspoon/0.75 milliliters of household bleach per gallon of water). Remove and discard any items that cannot be washed and disinfected.
- Dry ceilings and walls. Remove any flood-soaked wallboards to minimize mold growth. Discard carpet padding damaged by floodwater.

For more detailed tips and instructions on home rescue and recovery following a flood, visit sccmo.org/flood.

Assessor and Recorder of Deeds

Real Estate Assessment Modifications and Free Land Deed Copies: Homeowners with property destroyed by flooding can apply to have their real estate assessment modified through the St. Charles County Assessor's office. The property must be inspected and determined to be "unsafe" and uninhabitable by the St. Charles County Division of Building and Code Enforcement. Visit sccmo.org/Assessor to download a form, visit the Assessor's office at the County Administration Building, 201 N. Second Street in St. Charles, during regular business hours or call 636-949-7425 for more information.

From June 12 to Sept. 1, 2019, the Recorder of Deeds office will offer a free certified copy of land deeds to those needing to prove ownership to insurance companies or relief agencies as a result of flood damage. Any resident interested should visit the Recorder of Deeds office at the County Administration Building in St. Charles during regular business hours and request a copy. For questions, please call 636-949-7509.

Public Health

The St. Charles County Public Department of Public Health offers the following information to assist flood victims:

Tetanus shots — either Tetanus-Diphtheria-Pertussis (Tdap) or Tetanus-Diphtheria (Td) — for flood recovery efforts in St. Charles County can be obtained through the County's Department of Public Health or through other medical providers. Responder agencies and volunteer groups needing tetanus vaccinations for their members should contact the health department's Emergency Response Planner at 636-949-7554. Homeowners can schedule an appointment through the Department of Public Health's Immunization Clinic by calling 636-949-1857.

Food businesses closed by flood conditions or contamination must be re-inspected by the St. Charles County Division of Environmental Health and Protection at 636-949-1800 prior to re-opening.

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Well-testing kits are available through the Division of Environmental Health at 1650 Boone's Lick in St. Charles. For more information, please call 636-949-1800.

Additional Assistance

For additional help, please call United Way 2-1-1 (1-800-427-4626) and/or the American Red Cross St. Louis Area Disaster Resources Line at 314-516-2769.

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Media Contact: Mary Enger, Communications Director, 636-949-1856, or 636-443-1008, menger@sccmo.org

About St. Charles County Regional Emergency Management:

St. Charles County Regional Emergency Management (REM) promotes unified planning and coordination of disaster preparedness, response, and recovery before, during, and after a disaster. To learn more, visit sccmo.org/EmergencyManagement.

About St. Charles County:

Founded in 1812, St. Charles County is one of the fastest growing counties in Missouri, and the state's third largest county in both population and economic share. It is home to 15 scenic county parks encompassing more than 3,643 acres with additional land under development and more in reserve for future development.

With a population of 395,504, St Charles County is home to large employers including General Motors, Citi, MasterCard Worldwide and Boeing. It is ranked among the top 25 counties in the nation in high-tech job growth by the Progressive Policy Institute and consistently has the lowest unemployment rate in the Metropolitan St. Louis area.

St. Charles County Government employs nearly 1,100 in more than 30 departments and offices, who work to make the county an excellent place to live, work and shop. For more information, please visit sccmo.org.