**[INSERT TOWN HEADER]**

**To:** Residents

**From:** [INSERT TOWN NAME]

**Date:** [INSERT DATE]

**Re:** Safe Flood Clean-Up Practices

Floods can have a devastating effect on those who go through them. Flood damage can be the result of a catastrophic rain fall, heavy snow melt, back up of septic and sewage systems, or even the collapse of a nearby pool. As communities recover from flooding events, it is important to take precautions to ensure personal safety and minimize any health risks.

**Personal Safety**

Flood clean-up requires the use of disinfectants to kill any bacteria or other organisms. Follow these tips to protect your health during flood clean-up:

* Always wear personal protective equipment like gloves, boots and eyewear. You may even want to use a mask
* When using chemicals always follow manufacturer recommendations, and never use disinfectants in concentrations greater than when recommended
* Never enter a flooded area until the electricity has been disconnected. Contact your local power company or an electrician to disconnect the power

**Before Clean-Up Begins**

* Take photos or videos and contact your insurance company for other requirements.
* Keep Records of all your expenses

**Begin Clean-Up**

While it is best to wait for flood waters to recede on their own, you may need to pump water out to begin clean-up. If you need to pump water out, be sure it is directed to a street drainage system. Pumping water into a flooded stream may make the problem worse.

* Vacuum remaining water using a wet/dry shop vacuum cleaner
* Throw away wet materials that can’t be cleaned like upholstered furniture and large rugs
* Shovel out any mud or silt before it dries
* If you had sewage backup do not pump sewage outside or into the catch basins. You may want to call a professional for safe removal

**Scrub & Dry Surfaces**

* Launder and dry any affecting clothing items
* Scrub floors and woodwork with a stiff brush and proper cleaning solutions to prevent mildew growth
* Use fans, heated air and/or dehumidifiers to aid in drying
* Continuous circulation of air over wet surfaces can reduce drying times

**Additional Resources**:

* [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Clean Up Safely After a Disaster](https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/cleanup/facts.html)
* [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Flood Information](https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/floods/index.html)
* [United States Environmental Protection Agency – Resources for Flood Cleanup and Indoor Air Quality](https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/resources-flood-cleanup-and-indoor-air-quality)
* [MA Department of Environmental Protection – Flooding and Sewage Back-Ups](https://www.mass.gov/guides/flooding-and-sewage-back-ups-home-care-guide)