



## INSTRUCTIONS TO BE FOLLOWED WHEN LAND IS FLOODED IN ORDER TO PREVENT HEALTH RISKS

The Public Health Branch of the Outaouais *Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux* (CISSS) would like to remind residents of the precautionary measures to take for preventing health problems connected with flooding.

### **TO PREVENT ELECTROCUTION :**

- Before water builds up in your home, shut off the electricity with your feet dry. If there is water already in your home, contact Hydro-Québec (1 800-790-2424). Before turning the electricity back on, have specialists check the electrical system.

### **TO PREVENT CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING :**

- Never use combustion equipment designed for outdoor use (such as pumps, generators, barbecues or heating and cooking appliances) inside your home. These pieces of equipment produce carbon monoxide. If you plan to use combustion equipment near your house, be sure you have a battery-operated carbon monoxide alarm.
- Carbon monoxide is a toxic, odourless and colourless gas. Poisoning can occur within minutes. The first symptoms of poisoning are headache, dizziness, nausea, vomiting and fatigue. More serious poisoning can cause fainting and even death.
- If you experience symptoms:
  - immediately leave the premises;
  - call 9-1-1;
  - leave the door open when leaving in order to fully air out the premises;
  - do re-enter the premises until you have been notified by first responders.

### **TO PREVENT ILLNESSES CONNECTED WITH WATER CONSUMPTION OR USE :**

- If your drinking water comes from a municipal system, follow the municipality's or operator's instructions.
- If your water comes from a private well and your land is flooded, treat the water as non-potable until proven otherwise.
  - If the water looks normal, boil it at a rolling boil for at least 1 minute before using it for drinking, preparing food and brushing teeth.
  - If the water is cloudy or has an unusual smell, do not drink it; use bottled water.

#### **TO PREVENT HEALTH PROBLEMS RELATED TO CONTACT WITH DIRTY WATER :**

- Contact with dirty water (bacteria and viruses, chemical residues, etc.) can cause contact allergies (dermatitis) and infections, especially if you have a wound or a skin problem.
- It is recommended that children not be allowed to play in dirty water or on land that has been flooded, until the ground has dried out. Closer monitoring is recommended for young children because they tend to put things in their mouths.
- If you have to go onto flooded land :
  - wear rubber boots and appropriate clothing;
  - cover your wounds with a dry, sterile dressing;
  - keep your feet dry;
  - wash your hands frequently, especially before eating, to prevent the risk of gastroenteritis.
- Throw away any food or medicine that has come into contact with flood water.

#### **IN THE EVENT OF A NON-URGENT HEALTH PROBLEM : 8-1-1, OPTION 1**

- Calling 8-1-1 enables you to quickly reach a nurse in the event of a non-urgent health problem. The service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The nurses at Info-Santé (8-1-1) provide advice, can answer health-related questions and direct you to appropriate resources.

#### **IN THE EVENT OF A CRISIS OR DIFFICULT SITUATION: 8-1-1, OPTION 2**

- Qualified psychosocial workers are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to answer your call. They can support you, advise you, give you information or direct you to the appropriate resources in the region.

#### **FOR ANY SITUATION WHERE PEOPLE’S SAFETY IS IMMEDIATELY JEOPARDIZED : 9-1-1**

For further information or to find out more, see the “Inondation” sections on the Outaouais CISSS website and the “Flooding” section on the [Urgence Québec website](#).