



### **Post Disaster Hygiene**

Personal hygiene is critical to help prevent the spread of illness and disease especially during an emergency such as a flood, hurricane, or earthquake. Clean, safe water is essential for proper hygiene and hand washing, but can be difficult to find following a disaster.

If your tap water is unsafe, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend washing your hands with soap and water that has been boiled or disinfected.

To ensure your hands are washed properly, follow these steps from the CDC:

- Wet your hands with clean water (warm or cold) and apply soap;
- Rub your hands together to make a lather and scrub them well. Be sure to scrub the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails;
- Continue rubbing your hands for at least 20 seconds;
- Rinse your hands well under water; and
- Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

According to the CDC, you should use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol if soap and water are not available. While this will reduce the number of germs on your hands, it will not eliminate all types of germs. Also, hand sanitizers are not effective on visibly dirty hands.

Washing your hands is the best way to reduce germs! Maintaining basic hygiene and taking extra steps to ensure cleanliness will help keep your disaster recovery safe and healthy.