



DeKalb County Cooperative Extension

ELECTRICAL HAZARDS AND FLOODS

Electricity and water do not mix. After a flood, you need to be careful to avoid electrical hazards in your home. Below are some tips to help when you return to your home after the flood waters have subsided.

- Never touch fallen power lines. Call the power company to report fallen lines.
- If electrical circuits or equipment got wet or are still in the water, turn off the power at the main breaker or fuse on the service panel.
- Never turn the power off while standing in water and do not walk through standing water to access the main power switch. Call an electrician to turn it off.
- Inspect refrigerators, freezers, stoves, washing machines, water heaters, televisions and other electrical equipment that got wet. These items need to be dried out completely and inspected by an electrician or competent service person before using them. Some items may need to be discarded.
- Remove the covers on electrical outlets and switches that were under water. This will help to dry out the wall cavity. A better option is to cut away the wall board and remove the insulation in the areas that were flooded. Before using outlets and switches have them inspected by an electrician.
- If you see frayed wiring or sparks when you restore power, or if there is an odor of something burning but no visible fire, you should immediately shut off the electrical system at the main circuit breaker.
- If you are unsure what to do, contact an electrician or the local utility company. Always remember to be careful around electricity.