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EMERGENCY TIPS FOLLOWING DISASTER

Re-entering Buildings

- Stay away from damaged buildings or structures until they have been examined and certified as safe by a building inspector or other government authority. You may want to wait to return to buildings during daylight hours, when it is easier to avoid hazards, particularly if the electricity is off and you have no lights.
- Leave immediately if you hear shifting or unusual noises that signal that the structure may fall or if you smell gas or suspect a leak. If you smell gas, notify emergency authorities and do not turn on the lights, light matches, smoke, or do anything that could cause a spark. Do not return to the house until you are told it is safe to do so.
- Keep children and pets out of the affected area until cleanup has been completed.

TIPS

Listen to portable, battery-operated or hand-crank radio for updated emergency information and instructions either issued on NOAA Weather Radio or the local media.

Check yourself for injuries and get first aid (if necessary) before helping injured or trapped persons.

Assist people who require special assistance (infants, children, elderly, disabled) and keep them away from hazardous areas.

Be alert for impediments (subsequent rainfall during floods; aftershocks after earthquakes; tsunamis after earthquake; tornados after hurricane landfall; etc..)

Return home ONLY when officials say it is safe to do so.

If you determine your house is safe:

- inspect home for damage.
- be alert for damage to walls, floors, doors, staircases and windows
- look for and extinguish any fires
- clean up spilled medications, bleach, gasoline or other flammable liquids.
- take pictures of all damage, inside and outside, of the building and its contents, for insurance purposes.

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Stay away from: Cleaning products, paint, batteries, contaminated and damaged fuel containers as they are typically hazardous. Check with local authorities for assistance in disposal of these products to avoid risk.

Your residence **may not be safe** if the following damage exists:

- loose dangling power lines (**report to power company**)
- damaged gas lines
- foundation cracks, porch roof damage, overhang damage
- evidence a person may be inside (**if home is unsafe get everyone out**)
- odors that smell like natural or propane gas
- sound of a hissing noise (**if so, leave immediately call fire department**).
- water puddles or standing water that may have toxic materials.
- heavy debris

General:

- **Do Not drive unless** necessary
- Avoid damaged or washed-out roads or bridges
- Expect traffic light outages.
- **NEVER use candles;** use Flashlights instead.
- Avoid drinking or preparing food with tap water until you are sure it's not contaminated.
- Do not use water that could be contaminated to wash dishes, brush teeth, prepare food, wash hands, make ice or make baby formula.
- Check refrigerated food for spoilage. **If in doubt, throw it out.**
- Discard items that have come in contact with floodwater, including canned goods, water bottles, plastic utensils and baby bottle nipples.
- **Contact your local or state public health department for recommendations for boiling or treating water.**
- Be careful opening closets and cabinets as contents may have shifted.
- **Wear protective clothing such as:** long pants, long-sleeved shirts, sturdy shoes and work gloves to protect against injury from broken objects. During cleanup, wear protective clothing, including rubber gloves and rubber boots.

Animals:

- Watch out for wild animals, especially poisonous snakes that may have come into your home with the floodwater.

EMERGENCY TIPS FOLLOWING DISASTER

- Watch animals closely and keep them under your direct control.
- Keep them away from hazardous sites and floodwater.

Telephone:

- Use telephone only for emergency calls.
- Make brief calls to report life-threatening emergencies.

General Safety Measures:

- Have at least two fire extinguishers, each with a UL rating of at least 10A, at every cleanup job.
- Wear hard hats, goggles, heavy work gloves, and watertight boots with steel toe and insole (not just steel shank) for cleanup work.
- Wear earplugs or protective headphones to reduce risk from equipment noise.
- Use teams of two or more people to move bulky objects. Avoid lifting any material that weighs more than 50 pounds (per person).
- When using a chain saw, operate the saw according to the manufacturer's instructions, wear appropriate protective equipment, avoid contact with power lines, be sure that bystanders are at a safe distance, and take extra care in cutting trees or branches that have gotten bent or caught under another object. Use extreme caution to avoid electrical shock when using an electric chain saw. For tips on safely operating a chain saw, see [Preventing Chain Saw Injuries During Tree Removal After a Disaster](http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/chainsaws.asp)(<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/chainsaws.asp>).
- If there has been a backflow of sewage into your house, wear rubber boots, rubber gloves, and goggles during cleanup of the affected area.
- In hot weather, try to stay cool by staying in air-conditioned buildings, taking breaks in shaded areas or in cool rooms, drinking water and nonalcoholic fluids often, and wearing light and loose-fitting clothing. Do outdoor activities during cooler hours. For more information on protecting yourself against heat-related illness, see the [CDC Extreme Heat Web site](http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/index.asp)(<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/index.asp>).

Community & Family Resources

This page provides links to recovery resources on how to cope with disaster, how to help pets, types of assistance available following a disaster, how to find missing family and friends, how to reopen your business or farm after a disaster, how to remove mold and mildew from your home, how to find a place to stay, frequently asked questions, and community resources to help you recover.

- [Cope with Disaster](#)
- [Helping Pets](#)
- [Types of Assistance Available](#)
- [Find Family & Friends](#)
- [Reopen Your Business or Farm](#)
- [Removing Mold from Your Home](#)
- [Find a Place to Stay](#)
- [Disaster Survivor FAQ](#)
- [Community Resources](#)

STATE OF EMERGENCY *How to Protect Yourself*

It can be confusing to know what price gouging is, as well as when it applies to your situation. Price gouging laws come into effect when a State of Emergency is declared. In South Carolina, a State of Emergency is usually declared by: (1) the Governor, (2) the Attorney General or (3) the President. Local governments may declare one as well if a price gouging ordinance is on the books. When a business offers a product or service at a much higher price than the average price of the product or service in the 30 days prior to the State of Emergency, this is price gouging.

Are you a Victim of Price Gouging?

- ✓ **State of Emergency.** Has South Carolina's Governor, Attorney General or a local government declared a State of Emergency? If not, has the President declared a State of Disaster for the state?
- ✓ **Are you Affected?** A State of Emergency/Disaster can be issued for a specific area such as a county, or for the whole state.
- ✓ **Pricing.** Were you charged an unusually high price for a product or service?

If you answered YES to each item in the checklist above, you may be the victim of price gouging. Your next steps are:

- **Keep any Documentation of the Good or Service.** This means keep receipts, estimates, or invoices. The more details you have, the easier it will be to determine if it was indeed price gouging.
- **File a Police Report.** Report the incident to the local police department.

How Can I Avoid Price Gouging?

- **Stock Up.** Buy essential items such as food, water, and fuel before you need them. In the case of bad weather, you typically have some warning so that you can make a last minute trip to the store.
- **Plan Ahead.** Researching products and services you anticipate needing can be helpful. While prices may go up a bit due to supply and demand, a large jump from the estimate/quote you initially receive will give you evidence of price gouging. Find phone numbers for several companies so when you need their service you can compare prices and find the best deal.

REMEMBER:

A State of Emergency/ Disaster does have an expiration date; depending on who issues the declaration, it will expire at different times.

Seasonal price changes are not against the law. For instance, hotels typically have different rates depending on the time of year.

SCDCA aims to protect consumers from inequities in the marketplace through advocacy, complaint mediation, enforcement and education. To file a complaint or for information on consumer issues, visit www.consumer.sc.gov or call toll-free, 1-800-922-1594.