

**TOWN OF BLOOMSBURG**  
CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICE  
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To all residents touched by the recent flood event,

I would like to begin by expressing that the Bloomsburg Code Enforcement Department is very sorry for your loss. However the Town is pleased to report that no loss of life or serious injury occurred during the event.

The Code Enforcement Department began the post flood inspections on Sunday September 11, 2011 and will continue until all structures are safe for occupancy. This inspection focuses on two primary topics. The first is a structural evaluation and the second is the portions of the electrical system affected by the flood waters. If our inspector's find a structural situation that is not life threatening, it will be noted on your evaluation sheet. If it is believed that a structural failure is possible, this will also be noted but occupancy of the structure will not be permitted until a structural engineer can make a determination and corrective action is completed.

In addressing the subject of electrical components located below the flood elevation, all electrical devices such as switches; receptacles; light fixtures; circuit breakers; disconnecting devices and the like, must be replaced. This is not only a consistent policy of this office but it is the position of most (if not all) electrical agencies. It is also recommended that any wiring exposed to flood water be replaced, this is also **strongly** recommended by most (if not all) electrical agencies. This will be handled on a case by case basis. Wiring fed from above the flood elevation will be addressed differently than wiring that has been submerged. Numerous references to the dangers of re-energizing existing electrical wiring post flood event are available upon request at the Bloomsburg Code Office.

Mechanical equipment that has been submerged in flood waters should be replaced. Almost all (if not all) equipment manufacturers advise against the re-use of flood damaged equipment. Some manufacturers will accept servicing by the manufacturer or other service center approved by the manufacturer. The Bloomsburg Code Enforcement Department **strongly recommends** the disposal of mechanical equipment which has been submerged. Due to the contamination of the flood waters and the residue (flood mud) left behind, it is nearly impossible to completely clean items such as furnaces, boilers, hot water heaters, coal/wood stoves, etc. Any equipment that is the source of circulating air throughout the home (hot air furnace; duct work, etc.) is of a particular concern because of the risk of air borne contaminants in the future.

I ask that you keep just a few things in mind during this crisis. They are as follows:

- All local contractors are trying to satisfy all of their regular customers as well as friends and family of their regular customers. They are hurrying so that they can help as many people as possible. If you see something that immediately concerns you, contact the Code Office and we will respond.
- Right now there is more work than our local contractor can handle. This means you may be forced to deal with someone that you have not worked with before. To verify that a contractor is registered with the Attorney General, click here <http://hicsearch.attorneygeneral.gov/>
- There are a few key things to watch for:
  - Be wary of contractors who:
    - approach you in a door to door manner. Always ask for references. You can also contact the Code Office for advice.
    - insist on being paid upfront. The emergency work being done, such as electrical services, is not incredibly expensive. There is no reason why a contractor should need a "deposit". The Code Office suggests that if you are confronted by someone making such a proposal, simply tell them that you are willing to pay the first person who completes the job which passes inspection resulting in the re-energizing of your electric service.
    - want to take your old equipment. The Code Office does try to intentionally mar flood damaged equipment that can no longer be put in service so that we can identify it should there be an attempt to reuse in the same house or in another house. However, we do not always get all equipment. There is nothing wrong with asking for the bill of sale for the new equipment and there is nothing wrong with telling them to leave your old (damaged) equipment.
    - are telling you that an expensive upgrade may be needed due to new code requirements. For the most part it is perfectly fine for you to reinstall exactly what you are replacing. Call the code office for advice.

Unfortunately there are many pitfalls in dealing with home repairs and renovations. We are here to take your questions and to offer advice. If you see something that just doesn't look right, give us a call. If I don't know the answer, I'll do my best to find it.

**From the staff of the Bloomsburg Code Office, we appreciate all those who have been patient with the ongoing post-flood inspection process and we wish you well during this recovery period.**

*(Future message may be available at this location so check back with us)*

Respectfully,

Edward Fegley  
Code Enforcement Officer  
Town of Bloomsburg