



## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:  
June 1, 2011

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### **State Health Department Urges Residents To Think About Safety When Preparing for Flooding**

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health is urging residents to think about safety and take precautionary measures while preparing for the flood, according to Mary Dasovick, director of the Division of Injury Prevention and Control.

“Residents and volunteers in the Bismarck/Mandan area, along with other areas of the state, have been very busy sandbagging and making preparations for flooding. People are tired and may not be thinking about the importance of taking care of themselves,” Dasovick said. “It’s important for everyone to take some precautionary measures in order to avoid injuries and illnesses as this flood fight continues.”

The Department of Health offers the following tips:

- When sandbagging, make sure to take breaks on a regular basis. Over-exertion can lead to health emergencies, including heart attacks. Also, temperatures are expected to rise later this week. Taking a break in the shade or an air-conditioned vehicle will help avoid heat exhaustion and heat stroke. If you see someone who looks overly exhausted, remind them that it’s a good idea to take a break.
- To avoid back injuries, use the following safe-lifting techniques:
  - Stand close to the load and center yourself over it with your feet shoulder width apart.
  - Tighten your abdominal muscles.
  - Keeping your back straight, bend your knees and squat down to the ground or floor.
  - Get a good grasp on the load with both hands.
  - Keeping the load close to your body, use your leg muscles to stand up lifting the load off the ground or floor.
  - Your back should remain straight throughout lifting, using only the muscles in the legs to lift the load.
  - Do not twist your body when moving the load. Instead take small steps with your feet turning until you are in the correct position.

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- Drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration. With current cool temperatures, you may not feel thirsty, but it's important to drink something regularly. Water is the best choice.
- If you are injured, wash the wound with soapy water and seek medical care if needed. Make sure your tetanus vaccination is up to date (within 10 years).
- Wash your hands before you eat and drink, or use a hand sanitizer.
- Wear sunscreen to protect against sunburns and always wear mosquito spray to avoid being infected with West Nile virus. Information about West Nile virus can be found at <http://www.ndhealth.gov/WNV/>.
- Take precautions when cleaning areas that contain mice droppings, nests or dead mice. For more information, see the "Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome" fact sheet available at [www.ndhealth.gov/disease](http://www.ndhealth.gov/disease).
- Never use an electric generator, or other gas-powered equipment or tools indoors because of the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Always wear lifejackets when using watercrafts for flood-related work.
- As families and friends are busy with flood-related activities, it is important that children are properly supervised in a safe area.

The North Dakota Department of Health has a wide variety of flood-related information available at [www.ndhealth.gov/flood](http://www.ndhealth.gov/flood).

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