



Emergency Partners
Information Connection

Spotlight on Information for Response and Volunteer Organizations on Responder Safety

Dear EPIC partners,

Thank you for your services in the recovery efforts in Puerto Rico and USVI. CDC's EPIC prioritizes the health and safety of all responders and is sharing the information in this email with organizations who may train and send responders to affected areas.

CDC's National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) developed a comprehensive document titled [Hurricane Key Messages for Employers, Workers, and Volunteers](#) (also available in [Spanish](#)) providing detailed information relevant to the many types of work and circumstances that workers and volunteers could face. This document may serve as a reference guide for organizational leaders and deployment planners.

Below are summary points and printable resources that address the most common and critical issues and concerns for responders and volunteers working on the responses to hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria.

Before You Go

- Undergo pre-exposure medical screening.
- [Immunization](#) recommendations
 - **Tetanus:** Get a tetanus booster if you have not been vaccinated for tetanus during the past 10 years.
 - **Hepatitis B:** If you will be performing direct patient care or may have contact with bodily fluids, get the hepatitis B vaccine series.

[Packing recommendations](#)

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| • First-aid supplies | • Toilet paper | • Pants and long-sleeve shirts, closed-toe sturdy shoes |
| • Water filter or purification tablets | • Sewing kit | • EPA-registered insect repellent |
| • Nonperishable food | • Laundry detergent | • Sunscreen |
| • Gloves (rubber or leather) | • Flashlight and spare batteries | • All prescription medications and other medications |
| • Bed net | • Candles and matches or lighter | |
| • Extra pair of prescription glasses | • Zip-top bags | |
| • Hand sanitizer | | |



If you will be involved in mold cleanup, pack:

- NIOSH-approved N-95 respirator.
 - [Information](#) on how to correctly put on and take off a respirator and perform a user seal check
- Eye protection, such as goggles.

Risk Prevention

- **Carbon Monoxide:** CO is an odorless, colorless gas that can cause sudden illness and death if inhaled. When power outages occur during natural disasters and other emergencies, the use of alternative sources of fuel or electricity for heating or cooking can cause CO to build up in a home, garage, or camper and to poison the people inside.
 - [Generator Safety Fact Sheet \(English\)](#) ([Spanish](#))

Electrical hazards

- NEVER touch a downed power line.
- Do not clean up or work near a downed power line unless utility workers have turned off the power and grounded the lines.
- Do not enter flooded areas or touch electrical devices or appliances if the ground is wet unless you know the power is off.
- Turn off the power at the main breaker or pull the main fuse on the service panel if water has been in the building.
- Do not turn the power back on until electrical devices and circuits have been inspected by a qualified electrician. Even though water is no longer present, circuits and devices, inside building walls, may still be wet causing an electrocution hazard.

Mold-related illnesses: Flooding increases mold growth. If you have asthma or a weakened immune system, you are at risk of serious illness from mold and should not be involved in mold clean up.

- [8 Tips to Clean Up Mold Fact Sheet \(English\)](#) ([Spanish](#))

Injuries and wound care- Seek immediate medical care if a wound develops redness, swelling, oozing, or if you have other signs of infection such as fever, increasing pain, shortness of breath, confusion, disorientation or high heart rate. Avoid contact with flood waters if you have an open wound.

- [Emergency Wound Care Fact Sheet \(English\)](#) ([Spanish](#))

Mosquito-borne illnesses- Mosquito populations are likely to increase in areas affected by hurricanes. The best way to prevent Zika, Dengue, and West Nile Virus diseases is to protect yourself from mosquito bites.

- [Mosquito Bite Prevention Fact Sheet \(English\)](#) ([Spanish](#))



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Resiliency and Coping

Responding to disasters is both rewarding and challenging work. Stress prevention and management are critical for responders to stay well and to continue to help in the situation. [Learn more](#) about the signs of burnout and steps to take to take care of yourself and your teammates during a response.

- [Tips for Disaster Responders: Preventing and Managing Stress Fact Sheet \(English\)](#)

To make the biggest difference for those affected by the hurricane, you need take care of yourself. For additional resources, visit [CDC's Guidance for Emergency Responders in U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico](#) page.