

KDHE Issues Floodwater Notice

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment advises Kansans to exercise caution near flooded bodies of water caused by recent excessive rainfall. Floodwaters pose health risks, such as physical dangers associated with entering swift moving floodwaters and illness in humans and animals.

The potential for pathogens in floodwater to cause illness is often measured by an indicator bacterium called E. coli. While all rivers and lakes contain bacteria, it should be noted that some bacteria are naturally occurring while others can be illness-causing or indicative of other illness causing pathogens such as viruses. These illnesses can cause a variety of symptoms including skin, ear, respiratory, eye, wound infections and diarrhea. Kansans planning to recreate at or near lakes/reservoirs should check with the local management regarding flood areas that should be avoided.

Floodwaters contain visible and hidden dangers. If you encounter floodwaters, the best way to stay safe is to stay out of the water. Dangers that floodwaters pose include:

- **Rapid Current:** Flowing water is often moving faster than you realize. Murky flood water hides multiple hazards underfoot, one false step can mean being swept away and drowned. Never let children play in flood water.
- **Debris:** Rushing floodwaters can pick up anything: tree branches, lumber, furniture, propane tanks and even houses. These heavy items develop incredible force when pushed by rapidly moving water. Colliding with this type of heavy debris can cause serious injuries or death.
- **Chemicals:** Floodwaters and may contain any variety of contaminants including, fertilizer, pesticides, industrial chemicals, toxic wastes, paint, oil, fuel, gasoline and human and animal waste.
- **Infectious organisms:** Floodwater may contain illness-causing organisms such as Salmonella, Shigella, Hepatitis A Virus and Typhoid. Flood water additionally attracts mosquitoes which can breed and spread disease.

If you live in an area prone to flooding, pay attention to local forecasts and advisories or warnings have an evacuation plan and move to higher ground before the water rises. Contact your local law enforcement and health department officials for up-to-date

instructions in your area.

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