

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AFTER THE STORM – WHAT TO DO IF YOUR HOME HAS FLOOD DAMAGE

SUFFOLK, VA (October 12, 2016) Following this weekend's damage from Hurricane Matthew, the Virginia Emergency Operations Center and the City of Suffolk would like to make citizens aware of the following important information related to flood damage. While the City of Suffolk has only been made aware of a few instances of such damage locally, we wanted to share this important information in the event your residence or business sustained damage and you have not yet advised Planning & Community Development, who can be reached at 757.514.4150:

Returning home:

- Beware of structural damage before re-entering your home.
- Ensure you take proper steps to clean up flood damage.
- Throw away food that has come in contact with floodwaters or food that has spoiled due to power loss.
- Prevent mold and remove wet contents immediately. Wet carpeting, furniture, bedding, and any other items holding moisture or water can develop mold within 24 to 48 hours.

- For additional information and guidance, go to www.cdc.gov/disasters/floods

If you have flood or renter's insurance:

- **File your flood insurance or renter's insurance claim as soon as possible.**
- Make sure to have your information ready when you call:
 - The name of your insurance company;
 - Your policy number;
 - And a telephone number and/or email address where you can be reached.
- You do not need to wait for a Presidential (federal) emergency declaration to file a claim. This step is always your first step even if you anticipate applying for federal assistance, should it become available.
- Take photos and make a list of damaged property and items. Include age and value if possible.
- If you are a renter, also contact your landlord to report flooding and/or structural damage. Landlords are only responsible for the building, not personal belongings. If you experience any problems in coordinating flood-related repairs with your landlord, please contact Planning & Community Development at 757.514.4150.

To get more information about the National Flood Insurance Program, go to www.floodsmart.gov or call 1-800-621-3362.

Contact your local government to report your damage.

- **Regardless of whether your loss is covered by insurance, you still need to notify your local government to report your damage.** It is critical that you contact your local government to report your damage so that your home's damage will be assessed and documented. To make officials aware of any such loss in the City of Suffolk, contact Planning & Community Development at 757.514.4150.

FEMA assistance

Localities and the Commonwealth are still in the early stages of assessing damage from Hurricane Matthew. There is ***not*** currently a Presidential (federal) declaration. The process of requesting a federal declaration will take a minimum of 30 days and a declaration is never guaranteed. ***If*** a Presidential (federal) declaration for individual assistance is received, FEMA registration information will be distributed to the localities included in the declaration. You can also use FEMA's look-up tool to determine if your area has been declared for FEMA individual assistance: www.disasterassistance.gov

If you want to help others through donations, it is better to send cash donations instead of voluntary organizations having to transport and store items at great expense. Quite often, survivors do not need or can't use goods that are donated by generous fellow citizens. Organizations that receive unsolicited donations have to take time to catalogue and store such materials, which takes valuable time away from working on urgent needs. Make your donations to a reputable, established organization. To find organizations active in disaster response, go to www.nvoad.org/bucket/help-where-it-is-needed-most

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