
Safety is always paramount, but if you are inspecting damage to your home or business, you may be placing yourself in an already unsafe situation. Consider these tips below to help keep you and others safe!

If you are inside during an event:

- **Smell gas or hear hissing?** Do **not** use electrical switches or phones inside, immediately evacuate and call 911 from a far away, safe location.
- **Notice signs of structural collapse?** Begin evacuating immediately. Avoid climbing on unstable furniture or debris if there are safer alternatives to exit.
- Avoid touching any damaged electrical equipment on your way out.
- Do not re-enter the property until an official inspection has taken place and is deemed safe.

If there are no signs of imminent danger, check the outside for:

- **Loose or fallen power lines** – If you find one, stay at least 30 feet away and call 911 immediately. Warn others and stay inside vehicles if you are in a vehicle.
- **Broken or damaged gas lines** – if you smell gas or hear a hissing noise, enact your emergency evacuation protocol, and leave the property immediately. Call 911 once you have reached a safe location.
- **Foundation cracks, missing support beams, or other structural damage** - Damage on the outside can indicate a serious problem on the inside. Do not reenter until a building inspector can officially assess the structural integrity of the property.

Inspecting the interior or re-entering (if safe to do so):

- **Is a door stuck?** If a normally functioning door is jammed shut, do not force it open. It may be providing support to a damaged portion of your property. Avoid reentering if it can wait.
- **Need a light?** Use a flashlight for dark areas, do NOT use an open flame, such as a candle or lighter to inspect for damage.
- **Use your senses.** If you smell gas or hear hissing noises, immediately evacuate and do not flip switches or use your phone until you are safely far away to call 911.
- **Is the ceiling sagging?** That means it got wet and is holding water, which makes it heavy and dangerous. Do not poke holes in the center of the sag as the entire ceiling could fall.
- **Is the floor sagging?** It could collapse under your weight, so do not walk there. Immediately evacuate and do not re-enter until deemed safe by a building inspector.
- **Away for a while?** Be aware that animals may have sought shelter in or near your home as well. Tap loudly on the ground or walls with a stick to alert and scare off any pests.
- **Make temporary repairs and take pictures.** Safely cover broken windows or holes and remove any debris as long as it is safe to do so and within scope of your insurance policy. Save all your receipts for potential insurance claims. Pictures and videos are important when submitting your claims.