



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Release No. SPR-13-0718-01

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AIHA Urges Flood Preparedness in Advance of Peak Hurricane Season

Several health and safety hazards may be present in aftermath of storm recovery, flood cleanup

FALLS CHURCH, Va. (July 18, 2013) — With the peak of the 2013 hurricane season fast approaching, the American Industrial Hygiene Association® (AIHA) is urging advanced planning and preparedness prior to storms, as well as caution amongst workers and the public during flood recovery and cleanup. According to the National Weather Service, flooding resulted in 28 fatalities and more than \$495,000,000 in damages in 2012.

“There have already been a series of devastating floods in North America this year, the most recent being the ones in Alberta, Canada, which were the worst the province has ever seen,” said AIHA President Barbara J. Dawson, CIH, CSP. “Floods are serious catastrophes and have several hazards associated with them, the most common ones being drowning, downed power lines, carbon monoxide poisoning and exposures during mold cleanup.”

While workers who respond to flooded areas face the greatest risks, they can better protect themselves by learning about the various hazards commonly associated with floods. [The Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#) (OSHA) website has several resources available for workers on dealing with flood-related issues such as biohazards, debris removal, and rodents and insects. Additionally, [AIHA’s Consultants Listing](#), the premier directory of industrial hygiene (IH) and occupational and environmental health and safety consultants, contains a listing of IH professionals who can provide guidance during flood recovery and cleanup.

AIHA’s Incident Preparedness and Response Working Group has also published a white paper titled, “[Industrial Hygienists’ Role and Responsibilities in Emergency Preparedness and Response](#),” which provides IH professionals with effective ways to identify, manage and control the many risks associated with natural disasters like hurricanes and floods.

Additional Resources on Flood Cleanup:

- [Podcast interview on the role of industrial hygienists after natural disasters](#) - AIHA
- [Storm/Flood and Hurricane Response Web page](#) - National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health – (NIOSH)
- [Clean Up Safely After a Disaster Web page](#) – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Founded in 1939, the **American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA)** is the premier association of occupational and environmental health and safety professionals. AIHA’s 10,000 members play a crucial role on the front line of worker health and safety every day. Members represent a cross-section of industry, private business, labor, government and academia.