



RETURN HOME FROM FIELD DEPLOYMENT INFORMATION SHEET

This information is intended to ensure optimal health and well-being during the days and weeks following demobilization and a Responder's return home.

1. It is recommended those returning from a field deployment should:

- a. Clean all field equipment as usual. (When in doubt, throw it out!)
 - Shoes can be cleaned of visible dirt and wiped off with a 1-to-10 (1:10) bleach/water solution
- b. Response/recovery workers returning to their normal duties should get plenty of rest, drink plenty of fluids, and ensure proper nutrition.
- c. Response/recovery workers with known exposure to an infectious disease should be monitored as part of a standard epidemiology investigation where they will be interviewed for symptoms, exposure, onset dates, contact investigation, and/or prophylaxis recommended as necessary.

2. Infectious Diseases

- a. You are strongly encouraged to seek prompt medical attention if you currently have, or develop symptoms that concern you shortly after you return, particularly any of the symptoms listed below:
 - **Fever, chills, shakes, or night sweats**
 - **Cough, shortness of breath, chest pain, coughing up blood**
 - **Jaundice** (yellow discoloration of eyes and/or skin), **dark urine or pale stools**
 - **Severe headache**
 - **Diarrhea** is common, yet see a doctor immediately if you are unable to keep fluids down, have a fever, or if the diarrhea is bloody or profuse and watery.
 - **Vomiting**, particularly if it occurs with fever
 - **Rash**
 - **Muscle aches and pains**
 - **Red eyes**
 - **Unexplained weight loss or loss of appetite**
 - **Skin infection** of cuts or abrasions acquired while assisting with disaster relief efforts.
- b. If you suffered *bug bites, animal bites or scratches* while on deployment, seek advice about receiving post-exposure prophylaxis for rabies *immediately*.
- c. ***Be sure to tell your primary care physician you have been assisting with emergency response/recovery.***

3. Stress-related Illness

- a. Working in a disaster setting produces varying levels of stress for relief workers. The potential for manifestation of stress may be immediate or long term.

Stress-related symptoms include:

- **Difficulty sleeping and nightmares:** This is the most common symptom in returning relief workers. It can happen when you have a fever; however, anxiety is the more common cause.
- **Difficulty in returning to normal roles and life.** Including inability to focus, difficulty concentrating, communicating thoughts and/or remembering instructions.
- **Feelings of numbness** or a loss of feelings.
- **Wanting to isolate yourself.**
- **Negative feelings** that you could or should have done more.
- **Breathlessness** may indicate a physical problem as well as anxiety.
- **Sweats** can appear with infections yet are common in anxiety.
- **Other physical responses to stress** include diarrhea or vomiting, stomach aches, headaches or other aches and pains, tiredness/exhaustion, and either over-eating or lack of appetite.

- b. Some stress-related symptoms are to be expected and everyone has their own coping style. Taking time off to readjust and be with friends and family may be all that is required. Sharing your experiences with someone (it does not have to be a mental health professional) helps to relieve stress. **Internalizing stressors only enhances the chances of stress becoming an illness.** However, if these symptoms become prolonged, persistent, and disruptive or distressing, seek professional help.

c. **WHO TO CONTACT IF YOU REQUIRE FURTHER ADVICE:**

- If you become ill during the first few weeks after departure, see your physician or call your county health department for information and assistance. In some cases, Workman's Compensation might be necessary. Please talk with your supervisor for further information.
- If you or your family is suffering from behavioral, medical, or psychological problems contact the Employee Assistance Program (800) 860-2058. The EAP is available to you and your family at no cost. Participating in the EAP will in no way jeopardize an employee's job security. Information concerning an employee's participation in the program is strictly confidential and independent of personnel or other public records.
- Some counties have a Crisis Response Team available, please ask your supervisor for further information.

Please notify the Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Preparedness and Response, Responder Management Unit at (850) 617-1539 or StateESF8.LogSTAFFING@flhealth.gov if you are experiencing any of the physical symptoms mentioned above for awareness and to ensure others who have been deployed to that area can receive notifications.