



## **Severe weather can affect residential heating and cooling systems.**

Homeowners who have experienced flood damage are advised to take important precautions with regard to their home's heating and cooling systems, according to the Air-Conditioning, Heating, and Refrigeration Institute (AHRI), the trade association representing manufacturers of HVAC and water heating equipment.

"Standing water in a yard, house, or basement can damage a home's heating, cooling, and water heating equipment, in ways that are not always readily apparent putting families at risk," said AHRI President & CEO Stephen Yurek. "We advise homeowners to play it safe and replace, rather than repair, flood-damaged heating, cooling, and water heating equipment."

After a flood or storm surge from a hurricane, homeowners are advised to take important safety precautions with regard to their home's heating and cooling systems. A house or basement exposed to standing water can damage your home's heater, furnace, air-conditioning, ventilation, and heat pump system — putting your family at risk.

### **Replace, Don't Repair**

Flood-damaged heating and cooling equipment and systems should be replaced and not repaired, according to AHRI. All inspection and replacement work on flooded equipment should be performed by qualified heating and cooling contractors, not by homeowners. You can turn misfortune into opportunity by considering new, energy efficient models that will lower your future energy bills. Also ask your local utility about available rebates for new energy-efficient gas or propane furnaces.

### **Ductwork**

If you have a central forced-air furnace in the house you are repairing, pay attention to your ductwork too. A qualified heating contractor will not try to salvage duct insulation that has been in contact with flood water, but will replace it because it is impossible to decontaminate. Your contractor also will clean, dry and disinfect the ductwork. Doing a thorough job will require disassembling the ductwork. These repairs to your ductwork also give your contractor the opportunity seal joints in the ductwork and improve insulation to reduce heat loss.

### **Gas Furnaces**

If there is any question whether flood water has reached a gas appliance, have the unit checked by a qualified heating contractor. Natural gas furnaces have gas valves and controls that are especially vulnerable to water damage from floods and that damage may not be easy to detect. Corrosion begins inside the valves and controls, and damage may not be readily visible, even if the outside of the device is clean and dry. At a minimum, this damage can result in reliability problems.



## Heat Pumps and Air Conditioning Systems

Split air conditioning and heat pump systems have power and control wiring between the indoor and outdoor parts of the system, and the piping that moves the refrigerant from inside to outside the home and back.

Even if the system is in contact with flood water for a long period, this sealed system is likely to remain intact. However, if flood water has repositioned either the indoor or outdoor units of a split system by only a small amount, there is the potential for a breached refrigerant system. The heat pump (or air conditioning system) will then require major repair or full replacement.

If the refrigerant system remains intact after the flood, the entire system should be cleaned, dried, and disinfected. You should have a qualified heating and cooling contractor check all electrical and refrigeration connections for both indoor and outdoor units, including all control circuits. The decision to repair or replace should be made by a qualified professional on a case-by-case basis.

## About AHRI

The Air-Conditioning, Heating, and Refrigeration Institute (AHRI) is the independent trade association that represents manufacturers of air conditioning, heating, commercial refrigeration, and water heating equipment. An internationally recognized advocate for the industry, AHRI develops standards for and certifies the performance of many of these products. Additional information can be found at <http://www.ahri.org>.