

Pascagoula flooding continues through weekend

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The Pascagoula River stood at 23 feet, one foot over flood stage at Merrill, on Tuesday morning, February 25. The river had been at 22.5 feet a week earlier and fallen to slightly under 20 feet by early Friday morning.

Continued heavy rains in the central part of the state brought the water level back up.

More rain is in the 10-day forecast.

Flooding in the Southeast is widespread. WKRK in Mobile reports a number of rivers in the Florida Panhandle are nearing flood stage with flooding in many of Alabama and Mississippi rivers.

The Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) reminds all residents affected by recent flooding that there are precautions to take when returning home and cleaning up after a storm.

Personal Protection

When cleaning up storm-damaged areas be sure to wear protective clothing and sturdy shoes to prevent cuts and scratches from debris. Do not let children play in floodwater, and discard any items that come in contact with floodwater.

Any food (including food in plastic or glass), medicines, cosmetics or bottled water that has come in contact with floodwater should be discarded. If in doubt, throw it out. Intact cans may be thoroughly disinfected with one-quarter cup of bleach to one gallon of water and then used.

Around Your Home

When cleaning up debris around your home, be sure ladders are secure before climbing on them to clean the roof and gutters. If you plan to use a chainsaw to clear debris, be sure to operate the machine according to instructions. If injury occurs, call 9-1-1 or seek immediate medical help.

Flooding can cause mold to grow inside your home, which can cause allergic reaction, asthma episodes, infections and other respiratory problems. The MSDH does not handle mold removal or abatement. You will need to call a private contractor for further assistance.

Tetanus Information

Tetanus vaccination is recommended if it's been 10 years or more since your last tetanus vaccination (Tdap is the recommended vaccine). In the event of a puncture wound or wound contaminated with floodwater, individuals should consult a healthcare provider. Tetanus vaccinations are available at all county health departments.

Disinfecting Private Water Wells

Homeowners impacted by the recent flood who do not receive their water supply from a public water system regulated by the MSDH should have their private well inspected, disinfected and sampled in order to protect their health. For step by step instructions on disinfecting your private well, visit the MSDH website at www.HealthyMS.com/flood.

Snakes

If you come in contact with a snake during cleanup efforts, do not attempt to catch or kill it. Slowly back away from the snake. If you are bitten by a snake, do not attempt to cut, suck, or apply ice to the bite area. Do not apply a tourniquet. Call 9-1-1 immediately. Lay the person flat and keep the bitten part of the body at level of the rest of the body. Do not elevate or dangle a bitten arm or leg.