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# News Release

## City, health department warn of flood, standing water hazards

*Water can contain sewage, toxic chemicals, wild animals, other contaminants*

ARKANSAS CITY, Kan. (May 29, 2019) — The City of Arkansas City and the City-Cowley County Health Department are teaming up to warn citizens about the hidden risk and dangers of flood waters.

“We are aware of instances of children playing in standing water or flood water,” said City Manager Nick Hernandez. “This is a bad idea for many reasons, and parents should be vigilant in preventing it.”

The City is aware of instances in which overloaded sewer lines have backed up and caused raw sewage to intrude into the stormwater system ditches in low-lying areas, representing a health hazard.

Apart from the obvious and immediate life-threatening dangers of flooding, Health Department Administrator Thomas Langer warns residents of other risks to health and safety that floodwaters pose:

People must remember to keep out of flood waters. Never play, wade or swim in flood waters.

- Flood waters may contain bacteria, viruses, and other harmful waste that can cause serious illness if you come into contact with them or accidentally ingest them. Dead animals, human and animal waste, and other pollutants that were swept away by the flood waters will be present all around you if you enter flood waters.
- The force of flood waters can erode and expose dangers below the surface that you cannot see. Sharp surfaces that can cut flesh can lurk just below the water surface. Electrical wiring that still might be live may have become exposed and be an electrocution hazard. Flooded metal equipment or tools that can injure if you if tripped over or stepped upon can be in the water, unable to be seen.
- Never work in flooded areas, even as flood waters recede, without using appropriate personal protective equipment, such as sturdy waterproof boots or waders and heavy-duty rubber gloves. Any skin surface cuts or abrasions should be attended to immediately and

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not allowed to come into contact with contaminated flood waters. If any injury occurs, seek medical help and be certain to receive a Tetanus vaccination booster, if needed. Also, if you have a scrape that has been exposed to contaminated water and shows any sign of swelling or infection, seek medical help as soon as possible to avoid possible complications.

- If you live in a home that suffered the effects of flooding or have a building that was flooded, follow all of the required steps to clean and correctly repair the damage, including the removal of all flood-soaked debris. If you have a septic system or drinking water well that was flooded, contact the Health Department for assistance in making certain those systems are safe to use. Do not drink water from a well that has been flooded until it can be tested and is determined to be safe to drink. Use bottled water for drinking and cooking if you have a flooded well.

For more information about dealing with flood waters safely, visit the Health Department website at [www.cowleycounty.org/health](http://www.cowleycounty.org/health).

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