BUT FIRST, PPE!
HOW TO PROTECT VOLUNTEERS, STAFF, AND YOURSELF

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National Heritage Responder (NHR)

Connecting to Collections Care MayDay

THE FINE PRINT

These recommendations are informational and general in nature. The contents are not intended to substitute for professional medical advice.

It is the goal to assist as many people as possible, however, for direction specific to you and any personal pre-existing medical conditions, please contact a licensed medical professional.

THINGS THAT YOU WILL LEARN TODAY

Why are health and safety important?

What hazards do I need to be aware of?

How can I protect myself and others?

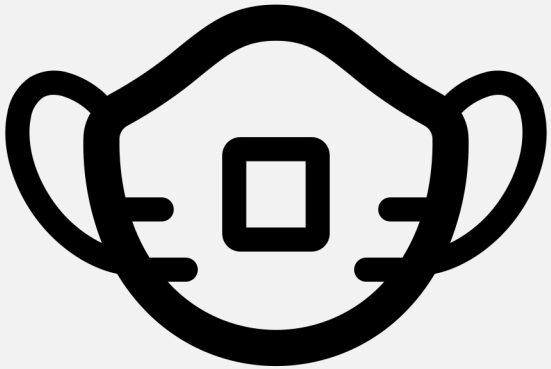
What resources are available to help us?

WHY ARE HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPORTANT?

Protecting people is paramount

It's required!

Health and safety are last on everyone's mind



WHAT HAZARDS DO I NEED TO BE AWARE OF?

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FIRE REMNANTS

FLOODWATER CONTAMINANTS

MOLD

WHAT ARE FIRE SMOKE, SOOT, AND ASH?

- Fire smoke: gases and particles from burned materials (active heat)
- Soot: carbon-based particles (organic) from incomplete combustion (no heat component)
- Ash: incombustible particles (inorganics) left after a fire, often lighter in color

Remnants of Los Angeles building
(Philip Cheung for the New York Times)

WHAT OTHER FIRE HAZARDS?

- Heavy Metals
- Asbestos
- Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs)
- Organic Compounds
- Microplastics

FLOODWATER HAZARDS

INFECTIOUS ORGANISMS

FUELS

INDUSTRIAL/ AGRICULTURAL CHEMICALS

HEAVY METALS

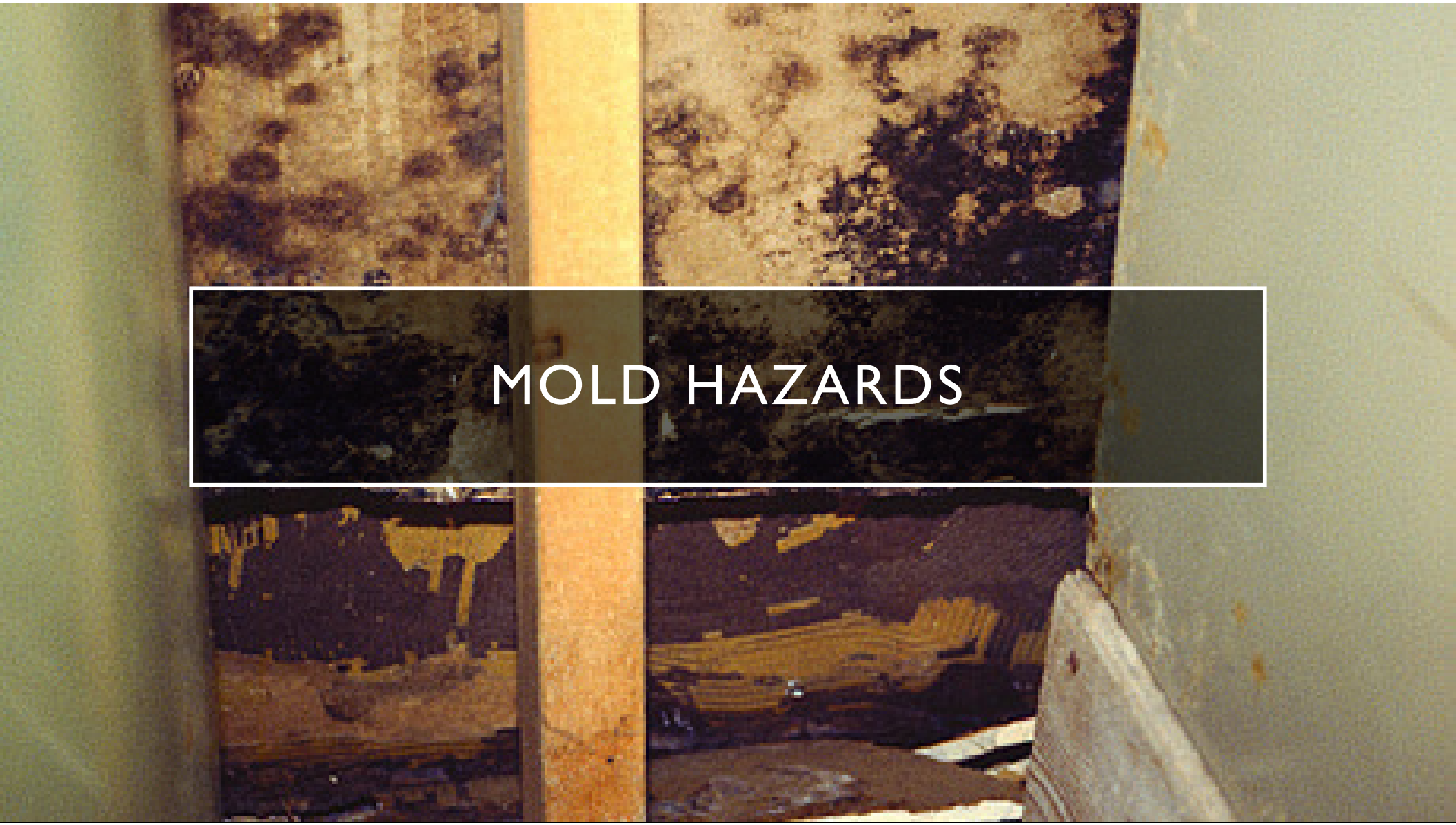
WILDLIFE

FLOODWATER HAZARDS

FLOODWATER HAZARDS

Use bottled water for drinking, washing, and cooking

Boiling, filtering, adding disinfectants are not sufficient for decontamination


MOLD HAZARDS

PROTECTING YOURSELF AND OTHERS

Personal Protective Equipment and Other Tips

WHEN WORKING WITH MATERIALS

Be sure you are protected! Use the acronym SHELF as your checklist:

- **S**kin Protection
- **H**and Protection
- **E**ye Protection
- **L**ung Protection (respirator)
- **F**oot Protection

WEAR THE FOLLOWING PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

- Tyvek suit (especially on-site) or washable long pants and shirt

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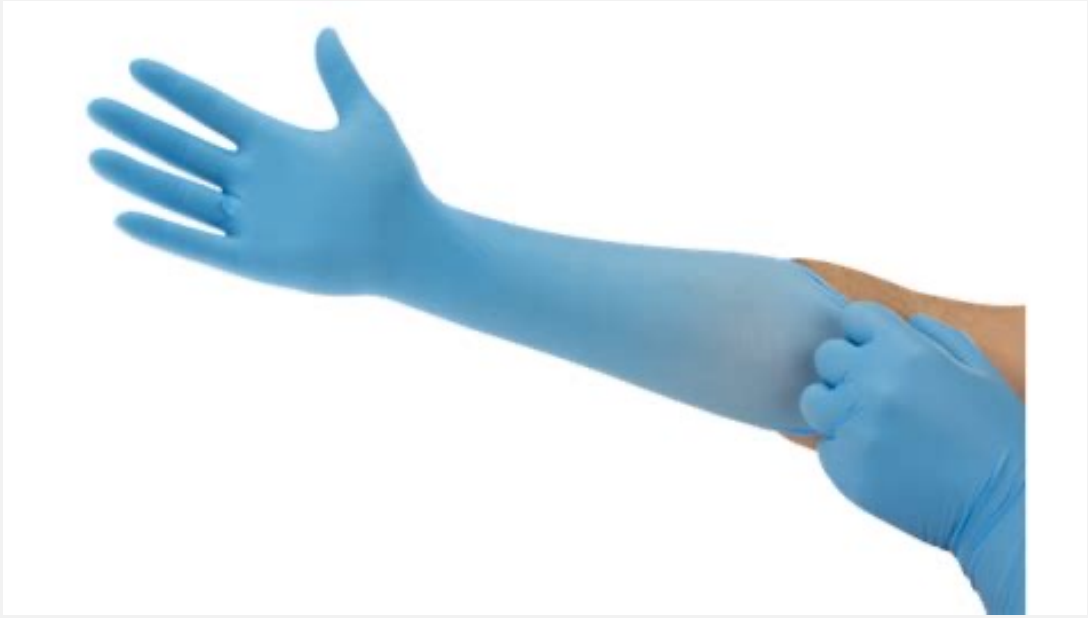
- Disposable nitrile gloves



WEAR THE FOLLOWING PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

- Tyvek suit (especially on-site) or washable long pants and shirt
- Disposable nitrile gloves
- Goggles (especially on-site) or safety glasses

WEAR THE FOLLOWING PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

- Tyvek suit (especially on-site) or washable long pants and shirt
- Disposable nitrile gloves
- Goggles (especially if on-site) or safety glasses
- NIOSH-approved, well-fitting N-95

  OR

- Half-mask respirator with P-100 cartridges

Firefighter wearing an air purifying half-mask respirator during search, rescue, and recovery operations in Maui.
(Hawaii National Guard/2023)

IS IT A DUST MASK, MEDICAL FACE MASK, OR A RESPIRATOR?

DUST MASK (NOT OK)

MEDICAL MASK (NOT OK)

WEAR THE FOLLOWING PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

- Tyvek suit (especially on-site) or washable long pants and shirt
- Disposable nitrile gloves
- Goggles (especially if on-site) or safety glasses
- NIOSH-approved, well-fitting N-95
    - OR
- Half-mask respirator with P-100 cartridges
- Foot Protection

PRECAUTIONS WHEN WORKING/ RECOVERING ONSITE

- Make sure you have permission before going to impacted site
- Children and pregnant people should NOT enter or help with recovery
- Avoid bringing pets into the impacted area
- Do not EAT in the impacted area
- Bring an extra change of clothes and shoes
- Bring trash bags to put used PPE and clothes in after visit
- Bring bottled water to drink
- Bring tissues or a small towel to wipe tears and sweat
- Watch for downed trees, power lines, and other physical hazards

PROTECTING PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH

- Psychological First Aid
  - Designed to reduce initial distress
  - Not therapy – can be performed by laypersons

Image credit: https://wellbeinghub.scot/resource/safety-first-psychological-first-aid/

REMEMBER TO CARE FOR YOURSELF!

- Take frequent breaks while working, especially when wearing PPE, to avoid overheating.
- Rest in shady, cool areas when working in a warm environment.
- Drink lots of water and nonalcoholic beverages.
- Replenish energy with high-protein, low salt snacks.
- Be mindful of your own mental health. Share feelings with others.
- Take breaks from news stories. Participate in enjoyable activities as much as possible.

HEALTH AND SAFETY RESOURCES LIST

List of Resources and Supplies

https://tinyurl.com/firstppe

National Heritage Responders (NHR)

(202) 661-8068

emergencies@culturalheritage.org

THANK YOU!

National Heritage Responders

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