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County offers health and safety guidance for weekend's Ellicott City Main Street cleanup

ELLICOTT CITY, MD – Residents, merchants and business owners planning to take part in this weekend's Ellicott City Main Street cleanup are being urged to follow important health and safety guidelines as they enter the damaged area.

The combination of high heat and humidity that's forecast for Saturday and Sunday, combined with the challenging conditions in the cleanup area has prompted Howard County Executive Allan H. Kittleman to implore those visiting the area to dress appropriately, stay hydrated and observe safety standards being put in place for the cleanup days.

"The safety and the health of everyone has always been our top concern," Kittleman said. "We will not put anyone into a dangerous or unhealthy situation during these cleanup missions."

Access to Ellicott City's Main Street will run from the George Howard Building, 3430 Court House Drive, on both Saturday, Aug. 13 and Sunday, Aug. 14 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Credentialing will begin at 8 a.m. Those assisting with the cleanup will be transported to Main Street locations by bus. All must be credentialed and be at least 18 years of age (or 16 years old and accompanied by a parent or guardian) to gain access to the cleanup site.

The Howard County Health Department is recommending that anyone with moderate to severe respiratory disease should consult a healthcare provider before participating in cleanup efforts. The department suggests frequent handwashing or use of a hand sanitizer as the best way of fighting germs, especially before handling food or any other hand-to-mouth behavior.

If you plan to visit the site, it's recommended you take solid, closed-toe footwear (preferably an over-the-ankle work boot or hiking boot), long-sleeved shirts and pants, goggles, non-porous and protective gloves and a flashlight. Also, consider bringing N95 respirator masks for exposure to mold-contamination or other hazards.

Because the heat index is expected to climb to 105 degrees or higher, workers are encouraged to take plenty of breaks, use cooling stations and drink plenty of water. The

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drinking water in Ellicott City meets all federal and state standards, but should be run through faucets for 15 minutes before use. Due to potential dangers of an open flame in this environment, workers are asked to refrain from bringing candles.

The cleanup days are intended to allow residents and merchants to remove trash and debris, but not retrieve items from their properties at this time.

For more information about this weekend or other items related to the Ellicott City recovery, visit our new website, www.ECfloodrecovery.org.

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