



After the Flood – Property Owner’s Checklist

The following are steps property owners are advised to take when returning home after a flood.

Re-entering your home

- Do not return home until authorities have advised that it is safe to do so.
- If the main power switch was not turned off prior to flooding, do not re-enter your home until a qualified electrician has determined it is safe to do so.
- Use extreme caution when returning to your home after a flood.
- Appliances that may have been flooded pose a risk of shock or fire when turned on. Do not use any appliances, heating, pressure, or sewage system until electrical components have been thoroughly cleaned, dried, and inspected by a qualified electrician.
- The main electrical panel must be inspected by a qualified electrician to ensure that it is safe.

Ensure building safety

- Make sure the building is safe.
- Look for buckled walls or floors.
- Watch for holes in the floor, broken glass, and other potentially dangerous debris.

Water

- Flood water can be heavily contaminated with sewage and other pollutants. It can cause sickness and infections.
- Household items that have been flood-damaged may have to be discarded according to local regulations (eg. fridge and freezer contents may be spoiled).

Documentation

- Record details of flood damage by list and photograph or video, if possible

Cleanup

Maintain good hygiene during flood cleanup. Minimize contact with floodwater or anything that may have been in contact with it. Keep children away from contaminated areas during cleanup operations.

Recommended flood cleanup equipment

- Gloves, boots
- Masks and other protective gear
- Pails, mops, and squeegees
- Plastic garbage bags
- Unscented detergent
- Large containers for soaking bedding, clothing and linens, and clotheslines to hang them to dry

Additional equipment

- Depending on your situation, you may need to rent additional equipment such as extension cords, submersible pumps, wet/dry shop vacuums, a carbon monoxide sensor and dehumidifiers, fans, or heaters.
- When using the equipment, keep extension cords out of the water.

Heating and appliances

- Do not heat your home to more than 4°C (about 40°F) until all of the water is removed.
- If you use pumps or heaters powered by gasoline, kerosene, or propane, buy and install a carbon monoxide sensor. Combustion devices can produce large amounts of lethal carbon monoxide if they're not tuned-up or are improperly ventilated.
- Do not use flooded appliances, electrical outlets, switch boxes or fuse-breaker panels until they have been checked by your local utility company.
- Whether you use a wood, gas, or electrical heating system, have it thoroughly inspected by a qualified technician before using it again – you may need to replace the furnace blower motor, switches, and controls if they have been soaked.
- Flooded forced-air heating ducts and return-duct pans should be either cleaned or replaced.
- Replace filters and insulation inside furnaces, water heaters, refrigerators, and freezers if they have been wet.

Floor drains

- Flush and disinfect floor drains and sump pumps with detergent and water. Scrub them to remove greasy dirt and grime.

Carpets and furniture

- Carpets must be dried within the first two days. Carpets soaked with sewage must be discarded immediately.
- Remove residual mud and soil from furniture, appliances, etc.
- If items are just damp, let the mud dry and then brush it off.
- To test if material is dry, tape clear food wrap to the surface of the item. If the covered section turns darker than the surrounding material, it is still damp. Dry until this no longer occurs.
- For upholstered furniture you should consult a professional to see what can be salvaged. In the meantime, remove cushions and dry separately. Do not remove upholstery. Raise furniture on blocks and place fans underneath.
- Wooden furniture: Remove drawers and open doors. Do not dry quickly or splitting may occur.

Mould

- Mould can lead to serious health problems.
- You may need to have your home professionally cleaned. Check with your insurance company.
- If you are cleaning up in a room where mould is present, wear a face mask and disposable gloves.
- To minimize mould growth, move items to a cool, dry area within 48 hours and set up fans.
- Wet mould will smear if wiped. Let it dry and then brush it off outdoors.

Food and medicine

- All undamaged canned goods must be thoroughly washed and disinfected.
- Dispose of all medicines, cosmetics and other toiletries that have been exposed to flood water.
- Dispose of any of the following food items if they have been exposed to flood water:
 - Contents of freezer or refrigerator, including all meats and all fresh fruit and vegetables
 - All boxed foods
 - All bottled drinks and products in jars, including home preserves (since the area under the seal of jars and bottles cannot be properly disinfected)
 - Cans with large dents or that reveal seepage

Before moving back in

Once the flood waters have receded, you must not live in your house until:

- The regular water supply has been inspected and officially declared safe for use.
- Every flood-contaminated room has been thoroughly cleaned, disinfected and surface-dried.
- All contaminated dishes and utensils have been thoroughly washed and disinfected - either by using boiling water or by using a sterilizing solution of one part chlorine bleach to four parts water. Rinse dishes and utensils thoroughly.
- Adequate toilet facilities are available.