

# Disaster Relief

## *Priorities for Cleanup and Repair*



Priorities for cleanup and repair vary according to the kind and seriousness of damage. Buildings may not be habitable during repair.

- Examine building structure.
  - Check foundations for settling, cracking, or undermining.
  - Examine walls, floors, doors, and windows for necessary repairs.
  - You may want to repair only temporarily until extensive work can be done.
- If basement is flooded, start pumping the water in stages. Pump out about a third of the water each day.
- Get the electrical system working.
  - If the switchbox is in a flooded basement, do not turn electricity back on until you have pumped out the water.
  - Take electrical appliances to a qualified service repair center as soon as possible.
- Get the water system working. Disinfect wells and water system.
- Shovel out mud and silt before it dries.
- Before they dry, wash down flooded walls and floors with hose. Start at upper limit of flooding and work downward.
- Scrub and disinfect walls and floors.
- Start heating system, if possible, to speed up drying.
  - Before operating the heating system, you may need to clean, dry, and recondition it.
  - Make sure chimneys are clean before starting the system.
- Dry out walls and floors.
  - If required for proper drying, strip drywall up to water level.
  - Drill holes in exterior siding.
  - Complete drying may take months.
- Repair buckled walls and floors.
- Clean and dry household items, furniture, carpets, clothing, dishes, and bedding. Disinfect when necessary.
- Treat items for mildew as needed.
- Care for damaged trees, shrubs, and lawn.
- Repaint, repair, and refinish as necessary.

### Supplies and Equipment for Home Cleanup

#### *Cleaning Supplies*

- \_\_ Non-phosphate detergents<sup>1</sup>
- \_\_ Bleaches<sup>2</sup>
- \_\_ Disinfectants
- \_\_ Ammonia
- \_\_ Scouring powder
- \_\_ Rubber gloves
- \_\_ Strong boots or heavy-soled shoes

<sup>1</sup>United States manufacturers have removed phosphate from laundry detergents.

<sup>2</sup>Use bleach sparingly, if at all. New EPA recommendations caution against its use.

#### *Equipment for Small Jobs*

- \_\_ Buckets
- \_\_ Tools (crowbar, hammer, screwdriver)
- \_\_ Sponges and cloths
- \_\_ Scrub brushes
- \_\_ Scoops
- \_\_ Throw-away containers for garbage, and a container to carry from house to street
- \_\_ Water hose

#### *Equipment for Large Jobs*

- \_\_ Buckets
- \_\_ Tools
- \_\_ Brooms
- \_\_ Shovels
- \_\_ Hoe
- \_\_ Sponge mop or a mop that is easily squeezed out
- \_\_ Water hose
- \_\_ Wheelbarrow
- \_\_ Dolly
- \_\_ Bushel baskets
- \_\_ Wash tubs (for soaking objects)

## For More Information

Booklets with more detailed information and illustrations about flood and mold clean-up can be downloaded online. Use the links listed here, or search by title and sponsoring organization.

- ***Creating a Healthy Home: A Field Guide for Cleanup of Flooded Homes:*** An illustrated 18-page booklet created through a cooperative effort of the National Center for Healthy Housing, NeighborWorks America, and Enterprise Community Partners. <http://nchh.org/resource/creating-a-healthy-home-a-field-guide-for-cleanup-of-flooded-homes/>
- ***A Brief Guide to Mold, Moisture, and Your Home:*** Photos and instructions may be viewed online, or a booklet may be downloaded, with EPA recommendations. <https://www.epa.gov/mold/brief-guide-mold-moisture-and-your-home>
- ***Flood Cleanup and the Air in Your Home:*** Basic safety and cleanup information in an easy-to-read booklet with color illustrations. Also available in Spanish. <https://www.epa.gov/mold/flood-cleanup-and-air-your-home-booklet>
- ***Recover after a Disaster:*** Red Cross online guides. <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/disaster-relief-and-recovery-services.html>
- ***Recover and Rebuild:*** FEMA resources. <https://www.fema.gov/blog/get-free-fema-publications-help-you-prepare-recover-and-rebuild>

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