

## WHEN YOUR HOME FLOODS

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\*Flood cleanup advice has gathered over time by those affected by storms in the past. – C. Stewart

### **WHEN ENTERING YOUR HOME:**

- **Be safe:**
  - Don't go into a home that still has standing water. Wait until the water recedes.
  - Only enter in daylight hours and ensure you have a flashlight.
  - The water can move things around. Watch your step!
  - Wear the right PPE.
    - Well-fitting **rubber boots** are a must. The water will be contaminated with many agents, including those found in raw sewage. An open sore or injury can be very serious issue under these conditions.
    - **Wear gloves** that are at least cut resistant. Puncture and cut resistant is better. Wear a disposable waterproof glove underneath if you have any open wounds or hangnails, no matter how small.
  - Turn off the electricity at the main panel if you can do so safely. This is critical if the water level was above the wall sockets.
  - Check for plumbing leaks and stop them even if you have to turn off your water at the meter.
- **Take pictures of your home.** Make sure they clearly show the highest water level in your home. Include photos of damaged furniture, valuables, etc.
- **Call your insurance agency** to start a claim.
- **Medical Considerations:**
  - Be aware that emergency resources in this situation may be compromised and slower than normal.
  - If you have a compromised immune system or a disease that hampers healing, like diabetes, consider hiring a professional.
  - Stress is a real hazard in this situation. Evaluate your ability to handle mental and physical stress before beginning.
  - Stay hydrated and take frequent breaks.

### **Do AS SOON AS POSSIBLE:**

- 1 DO FIRST!** If you have carpet, get it out of the house. All of it, rugs included. The rugs may be salvageable later, but for now, put them out.

- 2 Once you've resolved any plumbing leaks, drag a hose inside and rinse out the floors with clean, fresh water. Even if the water system is compromised, it's still better than flood water.
- 3 Open all base cabinets and get the contents out where they can dry.
- 4 **Important:** Pull ALL of your baseboards out. Don't worry about doorframes etc. Just get the baseboards off. This will probably start to release water that will need to be cleaned up again, but do it.
- 5 If your wall sockets were underwater, pull the face plates and save for later.
- 6 Cut the sheetrock off the wall to about above the high-water line. Do this in a straight line if possible. It will facilitate repair. Do not just rip it off. Be aware of the placement of electrical lines so you don't accidentally cut wires/pipes. On interior walls, you may be able to get away with only taking sheetrock off one side. Use your best judgment. **Note:** There is significant risk of hand injury when tearing out sheetrock!
- 7 Pull the insulation out of the wall where you cut the sheetrock. This is important. You must get your studs dry as soon as possible to avoid later rot and mold. Don't pull the fiber board from behind the brick. That may be salvageable.
- 8 Pull up any buckled flooring and discard it. If you have laminate flooring, it will never be the same again anyway. Tile should be fine.
- 9 Drill holes in the kick plates of your cabinet bases. If they are solid wood or don't look too damaged, you'll be able to cover the holes later with a laminate. If the cabinets are badly damaged, you'll be pulling them later and you don't want to get slowed down with that now. At this point, you just want the water out.
- 10 On the outside of your home, ensure that water is able to drain away. This means pulling back any landscaping that is above the level of the floor. If you

have a brick home, clear debris from the weep holes in the brick on the outside.

- 11** Using a mild bleach solution, spray the studs, cabinets and flooring that is left and clean it up. An alternate is a product designed for mold remediation like MoldControl<sup>®</sup> by Concrobium. **Note:** Never mix bleach and ammonia.
- 12** Get your AC running if possible and dry your house out. If you can get dehumidifiers, get them and run them. The longer the house has moisture in it, the more chance of mold developing.
- 13** The wiring in the walls and probably the wall sockets will be okay. Don't get too hung up with that. You can always replace sockets later if needed.

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS TO GET MOISTURE OUT AS FAST AS POSSIBLE. DON'T PUT ANYTHING BACK UNTIL THE PLACE IS DRY RIGHT DOWN TO THE STUDS.

**Note:** When removing debris from your home, do not block the street or driveways. Emergency vehicles, trash trucks and other vehicles will need access.

### **Suggested Supplies**

- Flat bar
- Hammer
- Utility Knife – Always cut away from yourself and others
- Drill
- Reciprocating Saw
- Flat Screwdriver
- Bleach or Some Mold Control Agent
- Mop
- Push Broom
- Buckets
- Towels/Rags

*References:*

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