



Flooding Indoors

Updated 7/1/2020

What causes flooding?

Floods can be caused by:

- Window and roof leaks
- Over-filled storm drains
- Rivers or lakes that have overflowed
- Leaking plumbing
- Sewage system backups



Why is flooding dangerous?

Flooding can...

- Bring harmful bacteria, viruses, and parasites into your home and water system, especially if there is a sewage backup
- Damage building structure
- Damage gas and electrical equipment
- Cause mold growth (from water-soaked carpets, walls, and other items)
- Spread harmful chemicals if the water came into contact with chemicals

What should you do after a flood?

Call 911 if:

- There is a medical emergency
- The flooding reached or damaged your utilities
- A heating oil tank has leaked or spilled into the water

Stop the source of the water & clean up right away. This may need to be done by a professional if the flooding is large or if it involves electric/gas service, structural damage, etc.

Find another place to stay if needed. You might need to relocate if the flooding is extensive enough.

Do not use gasoline generators indoors. Using gasoline appliances indoors can cause CO poisoning.

Call 311 (available 24/7)

- To connect to support resources
- If a sewage backup caused the flooding

Use electric & gas utilities safely

- Do not touch or use damaged or flooded electrical or gas utilities
- Avoid going near downed power lines or flooded electrical equipment that might still be energized
- Protect yourself by using Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCI) when using electrical devices



How do you clean up after a flood?

1. **Stop the source of the water.** Fix the leak, unclog the plumbing, etc.
2. **Pump or mop standing water out of the flooded area as soon as you can.** Quickly removing standing water helps prevent mold growth. However, do not use gas-powered pumps or generators inside because they can cause carbon monoxide poisoning.
3. **Disinfect with bleach and water** if the flooding was caused by sewage backup.
4. **Clean, disinfect, and dry all fabric materials (like carpets or furniture) thoroughly.** It is best to bring these items to a professional.
5. **Get rid of any fabric materials that cannot be professionally cleaned, disinfected, and dried.** Do not leave any wet or moldy furniture in the building.
6. **Clean hard surfaces with a disinfectant** such as a mix of one cup of bleach in a gallon of water.
7. **Dry the flooded area(s) thoroughly with a lot of ventilation.** Use strong fans to blow inside air outside through windows and doors.
8. **Consult a professional about the building's structure.** You may need to replace damaged drywall and/or fix any structural issues.
9. **Pay attention to smells.** If you smell mold, then there is mold, even if you cleaned and dried furniture, fabric, or the building itself. Find the source of the moisture and eliminate it before beginning any other repairs.

How can you protect yourself when cleaning?

Wear protective clothing:

- Rubber gloves
- Waterproof boots
- Goggles
- Dust mask
- Disposable protective jumpsuits
- Other protective clothing as needed

After you have finished working...

- Remove and discard PPE you used during cleanup
- Wash your hands
- Take a shower
- Change your clothing

Health and safety:

- Clean cuts right away with soap and water
- Take breaks as you clean to prevent exhaustion
- Do not drink in or near the flooded area
- Visit your doctor if you hurt yourself or feel sick

