

# 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 what repairs are necessary.
  - You may want to repair only temporarily until extensive work can be done.
- If basement is flooded, start pumping the water in stages. Pump 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

### *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
- \_\_ Hoes
- \_\_ Sponge mop or a mop that is easily squeezed out
- \_\_ Water hose
- \_\_ Wheelbarrow
- \_\_ Dolly
- \_\_ Bushel baskets
- \_\_ Wash tubs (for soaking objects)

<sup>1</sup>U.S. manufacturers have removed phosphate from laundry detergents.

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

## **For More Information**

Booklets with more detailed information and illustrations about flood and mold clean-up may be downloaded from the Internet. 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://www.nchh.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=ANhmOoaHSfY%3d&tabid=311>

### ***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.

<http://www.epa.gov/mold/cleanupguidelines.html>

### ***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.

<http://www.epa.gov/iaq/flood/index.html>

### ***Recover after a Disaster***

Red Cross online guides

<http://www.redcross.org/find-help/disaster-recovery>

### ***Recover and Rebuild***

FEMA

<http://www.fema.gov/rebuild/index.shtm>

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