



Cleaning Your Home After a Flood

Flood waters may contain potentially dangerous materials, such as fecal matter from overflowing sewage systems, agricultural runoff and chemicals from industrial areas. Wading in flood waters can also be a cause of infection or result in a variety of injuries. Please follow these tips if your home has been affected by flood water.

- Practice good hygiene. Wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer if soap is not available after contact with flood waters. Wash children's hands frequently, especially before meals.
- Wear rubber boots, rubber gloves, and goggles during cleanup of affected area.
- Keep children and pets out of the affected area until cleanup has been completed.
- Do not allow children to play with toys that have been contaminated by flood water and have not been disinfected.
- Remove and discard items that cannot be washed and disinfected (such as, mattresses, carpeting, carpet padding, rugs, upholstered furniture, cosmetics, stuffed animals, baby toys, pillows, foam-rubber items, books, wall coverings, and most paper products).
- Remove and discard drywall and insulation that has been contaminated with sewage or flood waters.
- Thoroughly clean all hard surfaces (such as flooring, concrete, molding, wood and metal furniture, countertops, appliances, sinks, and other plumbing fixtures) with hot water and laundry or dish detergent.
- Help the drying process by using fans, air conditioning units, and dehumidifiers.
- After completing the cleanup, wash your hands with soap and warm water. Use water that has been boiled for 1 minute (allow the water to cool before washing your hands).
- Wash all clothes worn during the cleanup in hot water and detergent. These clothes should be washed separately from uncontaminated clothes and linens.
- Seek immediate medical attention if you become injured or ill.

Is My Food Safe?

Exposure to flood water after a storm could jeopardize the safety of your food. Eating or drinking anything contaminated by flood water can cause diarrheal disease. Knowing how to determine if food is safe and how to keep food safe will help minimize the potential loss of food and reduce the risk of foodborne illness.

- Do not eat any food that may have come into contact with flood water. **When in Doubt, Throw it Out!**
- Discard any food that is not in a waterproof container if there is any chance that it has come into contact with flood water. Food containers that are **not** waterproof include those with screw-caps, snap lids, pull tops, and crimped caps. Also, discard cardboard juice/milk/baby formula boxes and home-canned foods if they have come in contact with flood water, because they cannot be effectively cleaned and sanitized.
- Inspect canned foods and discard any food in damaged cans. Can damage is shown by swelling, leakage, punctures, holes, fractures, extensive deep rusting, or crushing/denting severe enough to prevent normal stacking or opening with a manual, wheel-type can opener.
- Undamaged, commercially prepared foods in all-metal cans and retort pouches (for example, flexible, shelf-stable juice or seafood pouches) can be saved if you do the following:
 - Remove the labels, if they are the removable kind, since they can harbor dirt and bacteria.

- Thoroughly wash the cans or retort pouches with soap and water, using hot water if it is available.
- If the labels were removable, then re-label your cans or retort pouches, including the expiration date (if available), with a marker.
- Food in reconditioned cans or retort pouches should be used as soon as possible, thereafter.

Using Cleaning & Sanitizing Products

It is critical to read and follow the safety instructions on any product you use. Below are the most important safety guidelines when using sanitizing products:

- Never mix bleach with ammonia or any other cleaner.
- Wear rubber or other non-porous boots, gloves, and eye protection.
- Try not to breathe in product fumes. If using products indoors, open windows and doors to allow fresh air to enter.
- Use regular unscented 5%—6% household bleach and follow the instructions in the chart below:

| Area or Item to be Cleaned | Amount of Bleach and Water to Mix | | Cleaning Steps |
|---|-----------------------------------|--------------|---|
| | Bleach Amount | Water Amount | |
| Clean and Sanitize Food Cans and Surfaces | | | |
| Food surfaces that may have touched flood water [Examples: countertops, plates] Note: Throw away wooden cutting boards, baby bottle nipples, and pacifiers | 1 teaspoon (4.9 mL) | 1 gallon | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wash with soap and warm, clean water. 2. Rinse with clean water. 3. Sanitize using a mixture of 1 teaspoon (4.9 mL) of bleach per 1 gallon of clean water. 4. Allow to air dry. |
| Food cans that are not bulging, open, or damaged | 1 cup (240 mL) | 5 gallons | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remove can labels. 2. Wash cans with soap and warm, clean water. 3. Dip cans in mixture of 1 cup (240 mL) of bleach per 5 gallons of water. 4. Allow to air dry. 5. Re-label cans with a permanent marker. |
| Clean and Sanitize Other Household Surfaces and Items | | | |
| Surfaces that do not soak up water and that may have touched floodwater [Examples: floors, stoves, sinks, certain toys, countertops, flatware, plates, and tools] | 1 cup (240 mL) | 5 gallons | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clean surface with soap and warm, clean water. 2. Rinse with clean water. 3. Sanitize using a mixture of 1 cup (240 mL) of bleach to 5 gallons of water. 4. Allow to air dry. |
| Clean Mold Growth Off Hard Surfaces | | | |
| Mold growth on hard surfaces [Examples: floors, stoves, sinks, certain toys, countertops, flatware, plates, and tools] | 1 cup (240 mL) | 1 gallon | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mix 1 cup (240 mL) of bleach in 1 gallon of water. 2. Wash surfaces with the bleach mixture. 3. If surfaces are rough, scrub them with a stiff brush. 4. Rinse surfaces with clean water. 5. Allow to air dry. <p>For more information see: Protect Yourself from Mold</p> |