

After Flood Cleanup Tips

When returning home after a flood, be aware that your house will likely be contaminated with mold or sewage, which can cause health risks to your family. Wear protective clothing (boots, gloves, eyewear, breathing masks, etc.) when entering your home. Regularly wash your hands after any contact with flood water, items that may have been in flood water, and after leaving your home. Be cautious for any wild animals (live or dead) that may have used your home as a refuge from the storm.

When First Re-entering Your Home:

- Return home only when the area has been declared safe by responding officials. Keep children and pets out of the area until cleanup is complete.
- Photograph damage to your property for insurance purposes before and after cleaning.
- If the home has been closed for several days, open doors and windows to let the air circulate for at least 30 minutes before staying for any long period. Be alert for symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning (headache, dizziness, nausea and confusion are just a few).
- Remove pooled water slowly. Pump out no more than two feet of water each day to equalize pressure inside and outside the foundation. Otherwise, walls and floors may collapse.
- Remove mud and debris from the home first. Then, scrub all areas with cleaning supplies and disinfect all surfaces with a germ-killing product or chlorine bleach solution (recommended to use 1/8 teaspoon/.75 milliliters of household bleach per gallon of water). Remove and discard any items that cannot be washed and disinfected.
- Dry ceilings and walls. Remove any flood-soaked wallboards to minimize mold growth. Discard carpet padding that was damaged by floodwater.
- Prevent mildew growth by air drying furniture, rugs, bedding, clothing and other wet materials as soon as possible. Use fans to circulate air inside the home. Wash and disinfect surfaces to kill spores that may have already developed. Discard any material that was submerged for more than 24 hours or was contaminated with sewage or chemical waste.

Electrical Safety and Cleanup:

- Follow safe practices by never turning on or off power sources while standing in water. If power lines are down outside the home, do not step in puddles or standing water.
- If it's safe to do so, turn on the home's power source. If deemed unsafe to use electrical, use an approved generator according to manufacturer's guidelines.
- Hire a professional electrician to replace or recondition electrical wiring and equipment. All materials that were submerged by the flood must be replaced and re-certified.
- Use a cleaning product or bleach solution to clean outside and inside all appliances that may be repaired and reused. When in doubt, throw it out.

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Disinfecting a Private Drinking Water Well:

A chlorine concentration of five parts per million (ppm) is typically sufficient for routine disinfection; a heavily contaminated supply may require up to 50 ppm for complete disinfection. After the chlorine compound has been added, open all faucets and flush all toilets until you smell chlorine, which will disinfect the distribution lines. Let the chlorine concentration stand in the system for at least four (4) hours, and preferably overnight. After waiting, open all faucets again and allow the water to run until no chlorine is detected.

For additional information on the proper disinfection of private drinking water wells, please visit the St. Charles County Department of Public Health website - <http://www.sccmo.org/1047/Water-Quality> or call the Division of Environmental Health and Protection at 636-949-1800.

For additional flood cleanup and safety tips, please visit:

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [Ready.gov](#)
- [National Weather Service](#)
- [American Red Cross](#)

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