

# Cleaning up After a Flood

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) advises the homeowner to take the following steps:

- Wear protective clothing. Rubber gloves and boots will help protect you from bacteria and possible infections.
- Avoid putting your hands near your face or mouth when working.
- Be sure the main power source to your home or business is turned off.
- Check for shifts in the house or building and cracks in the foundation.
- Open doors and windows to help dry out the rooms.
- Remove any standing water. Basements should be pumped out slowly, about one-third of the water each day. Water soaked grounds can cause a collapse of basement walls.
- Clean up mud, silt and other debris before they dry out.
- Hose down walls as quickly as possible and follow up with a second hosing with water containing bleach or a disinfectant. Disinfect surfaces, like shelves.
- Appliances that contain insulation cannot be easily cleaned. Have them checked by a service person before attempting to use.
- Remove all soaked materials and furnishings. Fully upholstered furnishings and mattresses cannot be cleaned and should be destroyed to avoid health problems.
- Carpets and rugs may be cleaned. Permanently attached carpeting should be removed before attempting to clean. Clean items out of doors or have them done professionally.
- Items like sheets, bedspreads, curtains and draperies should be washed with very hot water and detergents, or professionally dry-cleaned.
- Any flooded food items should be discarded unless they are in undamaged cans or commercially sealed glass jars. Sanitize the container before opening it.
- Sanitize pots, pans, utensils, dishes, glassware and other items you intend to keep.

"When cleaning up after a flood, we want residents to take the necessary precautions to ensure they are returning to a healthy indoor environment. They have suffered enough from the storms and floods."