



## Iowa Department of Public Health Division of Environmental Health

### Frequently Asked Questions About Flooding and Child Care

**Overview:** Recent storms and rainfall have caused flooding throughout Iowa. Child care providers have had many questions about protecting the health and safety of the children that they care for during the clean up of flooded areas. This fact sheet will answer questions received by the Iowa Department of Public Health and Department of Human Services staff.

#### My carpeting has been covered by flood water. How do I clean it up?



Flood waters are likely to contain all sorts of chemicals such as gasoline, fertilizers, and paints as well as raw

sewage and bacteria. Carpeting that has been soaked with flood water **can not** be adequately cleaned and disinfected for use in child care. Flood-damaged carpet must be removed and replaced.

#### I've removed my carpeting, how do I clean the floor before replacing the carpet?

Inspect the sub-floor for damage.

Remove any obvious dirt and



debris. Use a bleach and water disinfecting solution (1/4 cup bleach per gallon of water) to clean the floor. Allow the floor to completely dry before installing carpeting.

#### What about flood-damaged drywall and plaster?

These items also need to be removed and replaced. It is recommended that wall board or drywall be removed to a level at least 4 inches above the flood water line.

#### I've had flood water on my solid surface floor (wood, laminate, tile, and concrete.) How do I clean and disinfect it?

Remove any obvious dirt and debris.

Clean with a mild household detergent and water solution. Allow to dry. Follow with a bleach and water disinfecting solution (1/4 cup of bleach per gallon of water). Allow to dry completely.

#### There is flooding in the basement. Is it safe to have children upstairs in the unaffected areas? What about the bad odors coming from the flooded basement?



Unaffected areas of the building or home may still be used for child care. However, be sure that flood

waters and debris are not being tracked into and through unaffected areas of the building during clean up. Although odors from flooding may not be pleasant, they are considered a nuisance and not a health hazard.