



Repairing your Flooded Home

Check Your Home Before You Go In

If there is standing water next to the outside walls of your home, don't go in. You won't be able to tell if the building is safe or structurally sound. Before you go in, walk carefully around the outside of your home and check for loose power lines and gas leaks. You will know there is leaking gas by the putrid, distinct odor that is added to gas to let people know gas is leaking. If you find downed lines or leaks, call your utility company.

Check the foundation for cracks or other damage. Examine porch roofs and overhangs to be sure they still have all their supports.

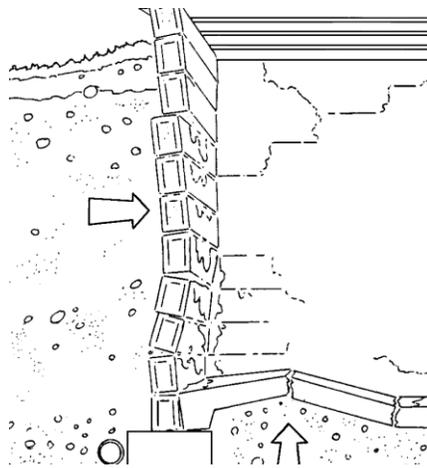
Look for gaps between the steps and the home. If you see obvious damage, have a building inspector check the home before you go in. Some communities require official inspections for all buildings after a flood.

If any supports or portions of the foundation wall are missing or the ground has washed away, the floor is not safe. If you have any doubts about safety, contact a contractor before going in.

Proceed very carefully.

Safety Checklist

- ✓ Wait for the water to go down
- ✓ Report downed power lines
- ✓ Report gas leaks
- ✓ Check for structural damage
- ✓ Turn off electricity
- ✓ Turn off gas or fuel
- ✓ Assume that anything touched by floodwaters is contaminated
- ✓ Disinfect everything the floodwaters have touched



Repairing Flooded Basements

If you drain your basement too quickly, the pressure outside the walls will be greater than the pressure inside the walls—and that may make the walls and floor crack and collapse, causing serious damage. To avoid this situation, follow these steps when you pump the water out of your basement:

1. Never go into a basement with standing water in it unless you are sure the electricity is off.

2. After floodwaters are no longer on top of the ground, you can start pumping the water out of the basement. Do not use gasoline-powered pumps or generators indoors because gasoline engines create deadly carbon monoxide exhaust fumes.

3. Pump the water level down 2 to 3 feet. Mark the level and wait overnight.

4. Check the water level the next day. If the water went back up, it's still too early to try to drain the basement. Wait overnight again. Then pump the water down 2 to 3 feet again. Check the level the next day.

5. When the water stops going back up, pump down another 2 to 3 feet and wait overnight. Repeat steps 4 and 5 until all water is pumped out of the basement.

Tips for Cleanup after a Flood

Restoring Utilities

- Before entering the building, make sure that the electricity and gas have been turned off from the outside. Open all doors and windows to remove any gases from the home and get rid of offensive odors.
- All electrical wiring, appliance and motors should be checked by an electrician before any attempt is made to use them. Clean and dry all switches, outlets and junction boxes that have been under water. Once these items have been cleaned and dried, have a certified electrician check the entire system.
- It is very important that your utility systems and appliances be turned back on the correct way. A leaky gas pipe, an ungrounded electrical appliance, or contaminated water is a serious safety and health hazard.

Items Soaked by Floodwaters

Should I Throw Them Out?

Usually

Mattresses, pillows, foam rubber, large carpets, carpet padding, upholstered couches and chairs, books, paper products

Always

Food, cosmetics, medical supplies, stuffed animals, baby toys

Building Materials Damaged by Floodwaters

- Gypsum Wallboard
 - ✓ Gypsum wallboard that has been soaked by floodwater should be removed to height 4 feet past the waterline.
- Plaster
 - ✓ If plaster is separated from the wood lath it must be replaced.
- Insulation
 - ✓ Fiberglass and cellulose insulation must be removed and replaced
- Wood
 - ✓ If allowed to dry naturally, wood will retain its original shape. Wood studs and sills do not need to be replaced if they are allowed to dry properly.
- Wall covering
 - ✓ All wall papers and wall coverings that got wet should be removed

Cleanup and Repair— Who Does What?

Jobs a homeowner can usually handle

- ✓ Sorting contents to be repaired or discarded
- ✓ Drying the ceiling, walls, and floors
- ✓ Removing minor debris such as branches and trash
- ✓ Checking the gas system
- ✓ Fixing leaky pipes
- ✓ Checking sewage disposal system
- ✓ Cleaning building and contents
- ✓ Checking sources of financial assistance

Jobs that usually require services of a professional

- ✓ Structural repairs
- ✓ Restoring electrical service
- ✓ Wallboard taping and finishing
- ✓ Checking the water system to ensure that it is safe to drink. (That service is often free from the local health department.)
- ✓ Major debris removal such as tree cutting
- ✓ Electrical and gas appliance and motor cleaning and repair
- ✓ Cleaning leather, furs, upholstered furniture, and expensive carpeting
- ✓ Major flood-proofing projects such as moving or elevating a home.

