

September 15, 2017



FACT SHEET: SAFETY TIPS FOR HOME CLEAN UP

After a storm or hurricane has passed, failure to remove contaminated materials can be a health risk. If there is flooding along with a hurricane, water must be removed as quickly as possible since it may contain material from overflowing sewage systems.

If flood water containing sewage has gotten into the house, the following measures should be taken to ensure proper clean-up:

- Wear rubber boots and waterproof gloves during clean-up.
- Be careful about mixing household cleaners and disinfectants. Combining certain types of products can produce toxic fumes and result in injury or death.
- Walls, hard-surfaced floors and many other household surfaces must be cleaned with soap and water and disinfected with a solution of 1 cup of bleach to five gallons of water.
- Remove and discard contaminated household materials that cannot be disinfected, such as wall-coverings, cloth, and rugs.
- Drywall and insulation that have been saturated should be removed and discarded so disinfection and drying of the internal wall structure can take place.
- Items that cannot be washed or dry-cleaned, such as mattresses and upholstered furniture, may possibly be air dried in the sun and sprayed thoroughly with a disinfectant. More likely, these items may need to be discarded.
- Wash all linens and clothing in hot water or have them dry-cleaned.
- Thoroughly disinfect surfaces that come in contact with food and children's play areas.
- Steam-clean all carpeting. The carpet and padding may ultimately not be salvageable.
- Fiberboard, fibrous insulation and disposable filters in your heating and air conditioning system should be replaced.
- Once cleanup is complete, it is important to completely dry out affected items to prevent the growth of mold.

It can be difficult to throw away items in a home, particularly those with sentimental value. However, keeping certain items soaked by sewage or floodwaters may be unhealthy. In general, materials that cannot be thoroughly cleaned and dried within 24-48 hours should be discarded.

For more information, please contact your county health department or visit

<http://www.floridahealth.gov/environmental-health/mold/index.html#cleanup> or www.Floridadisaster.org.