

If floodwaters or sewage fill your basement, you **must** clean properly to prevent you and your family from becoming sick or injured. **Do not bring children or pets into the flooded area during clean up!** The following are suggestions on how to clean up a flood or sewage problem.

Cleaning and Sanitizing

1. Drain all floodwaters and/or sewage by natural draining or pumping.
2. Remove dirt, soil and debris from surfaces that came in contact with floodwaters.
3. Wash down all walls, floors and surfaces that the floodwater or sewage touched with clean warm or hot water and a low suds detergent.
4. Rinse again with warm or hot water.
5. Sanitize by rinsing walls, floors and surfaces using one of the following mixtures:
 - 2 ½ tablespoons (tbs) of Lysol/Pine-Sol per gallon of water used, or
 - 8 tablespoons (tbs) of laundry bleach (i.e., Clorox, Roman Cleanser) in each gallon of water used.
6. Air the area by opening windows or using fans.
7. Prevent tracking of flood debris and sewage into clean areas.

Safe Water Supply

Water from wells that have been flooded should be considered unsafe and should not be used for drinking, cooking, brushing teeth,

dishwashing or clothes washing. Well water should not be used until it is confirmed safe. Pick up sample bottles for testing water from your local county health department.

If you **must** use some of the well water, do the following:

1. Boil it for 10 minutes, or
2. Add 3-4 drops of bleach to each gallon of water. Mix and let the water stand for 30 minutes before use. The water will be safe, however, a chlorine taste may be noticed.
3. A better option would be to use municipal (i.e., city or township) water or water from a well outside the contaminated area until your well is safe. If you must return to your home, take a **safe** water supply with you.

Utilities

The following guidelines should be followed when entering a flooded area with gas and/or electricity present:

1. Have the utility companies shut off the gas and electricity.
2. **Do not** touch the fuse/breaker box or any plugged in cords or appliances until the electricity is shut off. Touching these could result in electrocution.
3. If an electrical appliance motor or its controls are submerged under water, **do not** start it until consulting with the dealer or service company.
4. **Do not** relight appliances until checked by the gas company. Make sure all pilot lights are on before relighting burners.

5. **Do not** light matches until the gas is turned off. If there is a gas leak, it could cause an explosion.

Foods

Foods that are contaminated can make you and your family sick. They should be dealt with in the following manner:

1. Destroy and discard **all** contaminated bottled and boxed foods.
2. Canned goods (including home canned/jars) may be kept if cleaned thoroughly. To clean containers:
 - Scrub with soap and water.(Use a brush around the rim of canned/jars).
 - Submerge in chlorinated water for 15 minutes (1 ounce of bleach per gallon of water).
 - Air dry to prevent rusting.
3. Food stored in a freezer will keep for 2 days after losing power, if the freezer is full (1 day for a half-full freezer) and not opened.
4. If your freezer cannot be started in a day or two, store food in someone else's freezer.
5. Meat that has ice crystals may safely be re-frozen. If it is only "cool-feeling" it is best to cook it, and then re-freeze it.
6. Food stored in a refrigerator will keep for 4-6 hours after losing power; depending on how warm it is in the kitchen. Do not open the refrigerator unless absolutely necessary. You may add ice to the refrigerator if you know it will be turned on soon.

7. Throw out anything with an unusual color, odor, or if a perishable food is above 45 degrees Fahrenheit internally.
8. Place discarded food in a tightly closed container until pick up or disposal.

Clothing and Bedding

Clothing, carpets, furniture, toys and/or bedding should be discarded unless they are cleaned and disinfected. Moveable objects could be put outdoors to be cleaned and dried in the sunlight. Discarded clothing should be placed in a tightly closed container until pick up or disposal.

After clean up, make sure that all clothing and parts of the body that came in contact with the floodwaters and sewage are thoroughly washed. Be sure to wash your hands immediately afterwards.

Persons engaged in cleaning operations should be particularly mindful of their personal hygiene. Contaminated fingers should be kept away from eyes, nose and mouth. Persons are advised against smoking at this time because soiled fingers carry disease germs to the cigarette and then to the mouth. After clean up, hands should be thoroughly cleaned using a nailbrush and a lot of soap.

Note:

This information base was compiled from various state and local health agencies. Although this outline may be sufficient for your needs, contact your local county health agency for further suggestions.

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CLEANING UP THE MESS

... After the Flood or Sewage Back-up

