

# Flooded Premises

Flood waters can create safety hazards, particularly electrical hazards and structural damage, and may contaminate dwellings with disease-causing microorganisms. Damp materials can result in the growth of moulds that can adversely affect health. When cleaning up after a flood, focus on three key items:

1. Remove/discard items that cannot be cleaned.
2. Thoroughly wash cleanable surfaces with a solution of water and detergent.
3. Dry any wet materials thoroughly and quickly i.e. within 48 hours.

## *ENTERING FLOOD-AFFECTED BUILDINGS*

- ◆ Ensure that the building is safe before entering. Check for any downed power lines, gas smells, and structural weaknesses (damage to foundation, roof, door and overhang supports, ceilings).
- ◆ If access to your electrical panel is flooded, call a qualified electrician. If you have questions about power connection to the area, call your electrical utility company. Do not switch breakers on before the entire system has been checked by an electrician.
- ◆ If the smell of odourized natural gas is present, leave the building immediately. If your furnace is flooded, consult with a licensed heating contractor before use. Any gas appliance must be checked by a licensed gasfitter before using.
- ◆ Do not live in the house until the following have been checked: electric power, gas services, water supply, and sanitation facilities.

## *RESTORATION*

- ◆ Remove floodwater from basement as soon as possible.
- ◆ To prevent mould growth, all affected areas must be dried quickly (within 48 hours). Open windows for ventilation and to speed up the drying process.
- ◆ Prepare a household detergent solution for cleaning.
- ◆ Remove, clean, and dry furniture, upholstery, and other articles that have absorbed moisture.

Articles that cannot be cleaned easily or dried quickly, such as mattresses or furniture with thick foam padding, should be discarded.

- ◆ Pull up, remove, and dry carpets quickly and completely:
  - Padding or underlay is difficult to clean and therefore must be replaced.
  - Discard carpeting that has been covered with sewage-contaminated flood water.
  - Discard carpeting that has been affected by water for 48 hours or more.
- ◆ Break out all ceilings and walls that have been soaked or that have absorbed water. Remove and discard all damp drywall and insulation, then allow all interior cavities and structural members to dry for at least two weeks before installing new building materials.
- ◆ Contact your insurance adjuster if you plan to make a claim.
- ◆ For professional assistance with clean-up, look in the Yellow Pages under “Fire and Flood Damage Restoration.”

## *HEALTH AND SAFETY PRECAUTIONS*

- ◆ Wear rubber gloves when cleaning, and wash hands thoroughly afterwards.
- ◆ Discard all food contaminated by floodwater, with the exception of food stored in metal cans; clean and disinfect the outside of the can before opening it.
- ◆ A disinfecting solution can be made by mixing 1/4 cup bleach in a gallon of water.

## *ADDITIONAL DETAILED INFORMATION ON RESTORATION AND FLOOD-PROOFING:*

- ◆ Alberta Municipal Affairs - Emergency Management Alberta  
Phone: 780-422 -9000.  
<http://www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/mahome/ema/2005DRP.cfm>
- ◆ Alberta Health Services - Environmental Public Health  
Mouldy Homes and Buildings Information Sheet
- ◆ For health advice and information 24 hours-a-day, seven days-a-week, call Health Link Alberta toll free at 1-866-408-LINK (5465); Edmonton: 780-408-LINK; Calgary: 403-943-LINK.

The information on this handout is subject to change.

***For more information, please contact your nearest Environmental Public Health office.***

Edmonton Main Office  
Calgary Main Office  
Lethbridge Main Office

780-735-1800  
403-943-2295  
403-388-6689

Grande Prairie Main Office  
Red Deer Main Office  
[www.albertahealthservices.ca/eph.asp](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/eph.asp)

780-513-7517  
403-356-6366

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