

# FLOOD CLEANUP & STOPPING MOLD

Cleaning after a flood is different from normal cleaning. Take steps to keep yourself and your family safe.

## FIRST STEPS



If your home has flooded, make sure it is safe to go back.



If there is standing water next to the outside walls of your home, don't go in. Wait until you know the building walls and roof are still stable.



Before you start cleaning your home, take pictures/videos and make a list of all damage to your home and your belongings for insurance and to register your food damage.

## START DRYING

If you can, dry your home and everything in it within 24 to 48 hours. This is a very important step to keep harmful mold from growing.



Open doors and windows if the air outside is drier than the air indoors. Use fans to help dry the air.



Use a wet vac to clean up standing water if it is safe to do so.



Anything that got wet with floodwater and can't be cleaned and dried out completely within 24 to 48 hours should be taken outside.



For insurance, take photos of items that you throw out.

## DEALING WITH MUD

Mud left inside your house by flooding is dangerous for your health. If you can, remove it quickly before it dries.



While cleaning mud, protect your eyes, nose, mouth, and skin with goggles, mask, and gloves.



Shovel out as much mud as you can.



Make sure the electricity is turned off.



Use a hose to spray your home down, inside and out. If you have an attachment that sprays soap, wash and then rinse floors, walls, and any heating and air conditioning ducts that flooded.



Use a mop, wet vac, or squeegee to get water off the floor.



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GOVERNOR'S OFFICE  
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[ListosCalifornia.org](http://ListosCalifornia.org)

Governor's Office of Emergency Services  
[CalOES.ca.gov](http://CalOES.ca.gov)

California Department of Public Health  
[tinyurl.com/floodrecover](http://tinyurl.com/floodrecover)

Centers for Disease Control  
[cdc.gov/disasters/floods](http://cdc.gov/disasters/floods)

## DEEP CLEANING STEPS

It's important to clean anything touched by floodwaters with soap and water.

- Floodwaters can have toilet waste, germs, and harmful chemicals, so if in doubt, throw items touched by floodwaters out. This especially includes baby items, food, cosmetics and medicines.
- If the floodwaters have damaged carpet, drywall, ceiling tile, or anything made with fabric, foam, cardboard, particle board, or paper, try to dry these items out if there is no mold that you can see.
- If you can see or smell mold, throw those items out.

## CLEANING SURFACES

To disinfect hard surfaces touched by floodwaters like floors, countertops, sinks, and dishes:

- Wash with soap and warm, clean water.
- Rinse with clean water.
- Wipe surfaces with bleach water (1 cup unscented bleach in 1 gallon of water).
- Don't rinse.
- Air dry.
- Never mix ammonia and bleach.

## SAVING WHAT YOU CAN

You may not be able to save everything after flooding, so focus on what's most important to you.

- Photographs, books, and other paper items that are easily damaged when wet can be frozen and cleaned later when you have more time.
- You may be able to air-dry damp mattresses, couches, or other soft furniture in the sun. When dry, spray well with disinfectant. If you aren't sure if it is fully dry all the way through, throw it out.
- Wash clothes, towels, bedding, and other fabrics that got wet from the floodwaters by using very hot water and detergent.

## DEALING WITH MOLD

Dampness left from floodwater can cause mold to grow, which can make people sick.



Mold grows quickly. If you were not able to dry your home (including furniture and other items) within 48 hours, you should act as though you have mold.



Mold can make people sick. Be aware if anyone has a stuffy nose, itchy eyes, sneezing, sore throat, rash, wheezing, coughing, or trouble breathing.



People with asthma and other lung conditions and/or immunosuppression shouldn't enter buildings where mold can be seen or smelled. Children should not do any cleanup work.



Wear gloves, boots, an appropriate mask, and goggles to throw away moldy belongings and remove mold growth on hard surfaces like floors, countertops, sinks, and dishes.



**NEVER** use bleach straight from the bottle to clean mold from hard surfaces like floors, countertops, sinks, and dishes. Don't use more than 1 cup of bleach per 1 gallon of water when you're cleaning up mold.



If you hire a contractor or other professional to do the cleanup, make sure they have experience cleaning up mold and damage by contaminated water.



If you rent your home and have mold, tell your landlord. Your landlord is responsible for cleaning and removing mold. Painting over mold does not get rid of mold. If your landlord does not fix the problem, contact your county or city health inspector.