

# FLOOD CLEANUP

## Flood Waters May be Contaminated!

It is important to begin cleanup as soon as the flood water is gone. The first priority is to remove flood dirt and dry surfaces as soon as possible. Place items in direct sunlight if possible. Clean areas affected by the flood with a disinfecting solution to stop or slow the growth of bacteria, viruses, mold and mildew. Discard all soft plastic and porous items, such as baby bottle nipples, pacifiers, wooden spoons and cutting boards that may have come in contact with flood waters and absorbed contaminants.

The second priority is to throw away all contaminated and spoiled food and beverages by placing them in heavy duty trash bags. Do not eat or drink any items that may have come into contact with flood water. Commercially canned foods are the only items that can safely be disinfected by removing the labels and thoroughly washing the cans with disinfecting solution. Remember to label the cans appropriately with a permanent marker.

### *Protect Yourself*

- Wear protective clothing on hands, arms, feet and legs while cleaning including:
  - Rubber gloves
  - Washable clothing
  - Rubber boots
- Use disposable face masks that may provide additional protection where mold has developed, especially for individuals with asthma or respiratory problems.
- If you are injured while cleaning up, contact your health care provider.
- Turn off the electricity at the main breaker of your fuse box, even if the power is off in your community. Once the power has returned to your community, you can decide when your home is dry enough to turn it back on.



### *Make Disinfecting Solution*

- Mix household bleach with water to make a disinfecting solution using the following amounts: 1 cup household bleach with 1 gallon water. For smaller quantities, mix 1 part of household bleach to 10 parts disinfecting solution. Label this solution clearly to ensure that people do not drink it. Keep bleach and disinfecting solution out of the reach of children and pets.

**Do not mix chlorine bleach with anything other than water!**  
**Combinations can be deadly.**

### ***Clean Flood Affected Areas***

Use the disinfecting solution to clean all surfaces, such as:

- Kitchen counters
- Floors
- Furniture
- Baseboards and other surfaces touched by flood waters
- Toys and exercise equipment
- Outdoor furniture and children's play equipment
- Dishes and kitchen utensils. (Soak for 2 minutes in disinfecting solution. Rinse well with purified water.)



Keep surfaces wet for 2 minutes and then allow them to air dry. Remember to change the solution when it becomes dirty.

### ***After the Cleanup***

- Before removing boots, sanitize them with disinfecting solution.
- If possible, dispose of clothing that has come in contact with flood water or dirt. If not possible to discard, wash clothing in hot water and detergent. Thoroughly dry clothes in either a dryer or hang in direct sunlight.
- Throw out cleaning rags. Put them in plastic bags and place in regular trash.
- Remove gloves and thoroughly wash hands with soap and water or waterless hand sanitizer.
- Soak mops in disinfecting solution after use and wash again in hot water. Cleaning equipment, such as dustpans or buckets, should be thoroughly rinsed in disinfecting solution.
- Flush dirty solution down the toilet or pour down the sink.



### ***Hand Washing***

Proper hand washing is very important in reducing the spread of germs. Wash your hands frequently.

To properly wash your hands, use plenty of soap and warm running water, rub your hands together vigorously for at least 20 seconds, wash the palms and backs of your hands, use a nail brush if possible, rinse thoroughly and allow hands to air dry or use clean paper towels.



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