

Loss Prevention Safety Tip



Loss Prevention
Program

By Red River Mutual

CLEANING UP YOUR FLOODED BASEMENT

Basement flooding due to water escape, rupture, sewer backup or seepage can cause a lot of damage. Clean up and repairs can be very costly and, if not done properly, can contribute to mold and other health hazards for your family. While clean up should be done as fast as possible, there are some very important steps to take do to the job safely.

Safety First

- Ensure water, electricity and gas utilities are turned off. It is not safe to enter your basement if the water level has reached any electrical outlet, extension cord or baseboard heater. Call your local utility company for assistance if needed.
- Wear protective clothing, boots and gloves and cover all open sores and cuts to prevent infection.
- Use a flashlight when entering the basement - never use matches, lighters or lanterns as gas vapours may be present.
- Open all the windows in the flooded area to allow any gas build-up to be vented out of the house.
- Contact your Insurance broker as soon as possible to report the damage. It's a good idea to take photos or video of the entire flooded area to assist in assessing the damage.

Your Health

Being safe after basement flooding also means considering your health as there are risks associated with contaminated water. Flood waters can be polluted with viruses, bacteria and parasites. When building materials and furniture become wet, extensive mold growth can be expected to follow. Failure to remove all contaminated materials and failure to reduce moisture and humidity can present serious long-term health risks such as respiratory disease and allergic reactions.

Clean Up

Below are some suggested guidelines for cleaning up basement flood waters:

- Remove flood water as soon as possible using a wet vacuum or pumping method. Pumped water should be directed away from storm sewers and septic fields to prevent sewer backup.
- Remove damaged carpeting, furniture, drywall, appliances and personal items to a dry area with good ventilation.



- Always discard the following items if soaked or contaminated by flood water:

- boxed or bottled food
- food in damaged cans
- books & paper products
- mattresses & pillows
- medication
- medical supplies
- cosmetics
- stuffed toys
- cardboard
- carpets, rugs & underlay
- upholstered furniture

- Scrub all flood areas with hot soapy water. Wash all walls 24" above the highest water level. Suitable cleaners include dish washing liquid or laundry detergent.

- After cleaning a room, go over it again with a disinfectant to kill the germs and odour left by the water. In case of heavy contamination, spray all surfaces with disinfectant. Do not mix bleach with other household chemical products, especially ammonia or toilet bowl cleaners as the chemical reaction can create a poisonous gas.

- If possible, allow items still in good condition to dry in the sun. When thoroughly dry, vacuum and spray with disinfectant.

- Once properly cleaned, contact your utility company to inspect the area and turn the services back on.



Dry & Ventilate

Dry out your home and remove mildew by lowering the humidity. Heavy duty fans and dehumidifiers can be rented to quickly and effectively remove moisture.

- Open exterior doors and windows.
- Open all closet doors and cabinets.
- Circulate the air with fans.
- Run a dehumidifier.



For more information, please view "After the Flood - A Homeowner's Checklist" at <http://www.eskasoni.ca/uploads/applicationforms/After-the-Flood.pdf>

See more loss prevention tips at www.preventingloss.com

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