

Flood Cleanup

What are the dangers of a flood?

- A flood can be caused by rainwater or sometimes by sewage backups.
- Floodwater can damage gas and electric appliances, and possibly cause fire or electrocution.
- Water soaked carpets and plaster can cause mold to grow and create a health hazard.
- Sewage backups can bring harmful bacteria, viruses and parasites that can cause diseases.

What do I do if there is a flood in my building?

- Ensure your own safety. If there is major flooding that could have reached or submerged gas or electric equipment, dial 911 or call your gas or electric company to shut them off to avoid electrocution and fire hazard. **Never go near flooded energized electrical fixtures or downed power lines.**
- **Act fast.** Flooded areas should be dried out within 24 – 48 hours to prevent mold hazards.
- **Report flooding, especially sewage backups, to the Mayor’s Office of Constituent Services’ 24-Hour Hotline right away in order to assist the City in identifying problem areas.**
- Find another place to stay until the site is cleaned up.

How do I clean up after a flood?

- When it is safe to enter your home to begin cleanup, pump or mop standing water out of flooded areas as soon as possible.
- Throw away all materials which have absorbed water or been damaged.
- If walls have been damaged by the water, the building owner may need to remove the sodden or damaged drywall as soon as possible and restore the damage after the building is dry.
- Hard surfaces can be disinfected with a mix of one cup of bleach in a gallon of water.
- Once wet material has been removed and surfaces cleaned, dry the area thoroughly with lots of ventilation. Use strong fans to blow inside air to the outside through windows or doors.
- Heating oil tanks may have overturned and spilled their contents into the water. If there is oil or other hazardous materials spilled from containers into the flood waters, call a professional or 911. Do not pump any spilled hazardous materials outdoors or into the sewer system.

Protect yourself and your neighbors.

- Always wear rubber gloves, waterproof boots, and safety goggles. You may also need a dust mask. Other protective clothing (like disposable plastic coveralls) can protect you and your clothing.
- If you cut yourself, leave the flooded area and clean the wound out right away with soap and water. See a doctor to prevent infections.
- Do not forget to take breaks to prevent exhaustion.
- Do not eat or drink in the flooded area.
- After you have finished working, wash your hands, take a shower, and change your clothing.
- **DO NOT OPERATE GAS POWERED PUMPS OR GENERATORS INDOORS. INDOOR OPERATION OF GAS POWERED EQUIPMENT CREATES A CARBON MONOXIDE HAZARD.**
- Be aware of any neighbors who use electrically dependant medical devices (such as oxygen machines) who may be at risk if they lose electrical power. Please check on vulnerable neighbors or call 911. The Mayor’s Office can connect elderly residents to support and resources.

