Volunteer Guide - FLASH Cards
Immediate Actions After Flood Events

Cleanup and Debris Removal

Developed by the Federal Alliance for Safe Homes (FLASH)®
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Introduction

• Many organizations provide checklists and guidelines for cleanup activities immediately following a flooding event. These cards highlight the best practices for volunteers.

• The data provided within is for reference only and volunteers should consult their organization’s requirements prior to proceeding.

• Volunteer group members should always consult the construction coordinator when questions arise or when further explanation is required.
FLASH Tip No. 1: Safety

• Prior to entering any home after a flooding event, ensure the following is off:
  Electrical Service
  Fuel Lines & Gas Service

• Never use gasoline powered machines/tools (generator, pressure washer, etc.) indoors.
FLASH Tip No. 2: Protection

Wear the following to perform cleanup activities due to unhealthy substances left behind on the floor and in the HVAC ducts from the flood:

- N-95 or greater particulate respirator
- Goggles or other adequate eye protection
- Long pants/long sleeves
- Sturdy work shoes with puncture-proof soles
- Heavy work gloves
- If working with mold, consider face-shields, Tyvek suits and rubber boots
Pumping Out Basements

**Step 1:** Start pumping when flood waters no longer cover the ground outside.

**Step 2:** Pump out 1 foot of water. Mark the water level and wait overnight.

**Step 3:** Check the mark, if the water rose, it is too early to pump out.

**Step 4:** Wait 24 hours, then repeat the process.

**Step 5:** When the water stops returning to your mark, pump out 2 to 3 feet of the remaining water.

**Step 6:** Repeat daily until all the water is out of the basement.

Safety Tip: If you notice any new pronounced cracking or any buckling, stop draining immediately as the water outside the basement has not drained and is causing excessive pressure on the structure.
**Interior Debris Removal**

**Step 1:** Check with the team lead on debris separation prior to beginning work.

**Step 2:** Remove all flood-affected personal items, be sure to separate out items that can be cleaned or restored:
- Appliances
- Furniture
- Carpet
- Fixtures
- Any other nonstructural items

**Step 3:** Ensure to review the scope of the work order if questions arise about various items.

*Picture provided by FEMA/Bryan Adams*
Mucking Out A Flooded Structure

Additional Equipment Needed:
  • Shovels
  • Wheelbarrows
  • Squeegees

Step 1: Remove mud, muck and silt that was deposited in the house by floodwaters
Step 2: Defer to local debris management guidelines on disposal
Step 3: Hose out house after mucking has been completed
Mold Treatment

**Step 1:** Workers must wear appropriate personal protective equipment

**Step 2:** Isolate areas to be treated from unaffected areas

**Step 3:** Ventilate the area

**Step 4:** Wet all materials to be removed to limit particulate exposure

**Step 5:** Immediately remove and discard all materials per debris removal plan

Safety Tip: Minimize contamination of unaffected areas and contaminant exposure to workers.

Picture provided by FEMA/Marilee Caliendo
Gutting A Flooded Structure

Additional Equipment needed:

- Hammers
- Crow bars/Pry bars
- Nail Pullers (Cat claws)
- Saws (Dry wall/Reciprocating/Circular)

Walls:

Step 1: Remove damaged trim and molding
Step 2: Remove damaged sheetrock
  - Remove 2 feet above water line
  - Cutting at 4 ft. level allows for replacement of full sheets
Step 3: Remove damaged paneling
Step 4: Remove damaged insulation
Step 5: Remove nails from studs
Step 6: Place all removed materials per local debris management guidelines

Picture provided by FEMA/Marty Bahamonde
Gutting A Flooded Structure

Additional Equipment needed:
- Shovels
- Crow bars/Pry bars
- Hammers
- Wheelbarrows
- Floor scraper

Remove damaged floor materials:
- Carpet/Padding
- Flooring
- All nails

Remove damaged electrical materials:
- Electrical fixture
- Electrical wiring

Picture provided by FEMA/David Valdez
Final Cleaning & Sanitizing

Step 1: Use a pressure washer with proper detergent mix (typically 10% detergent solution)

Step 2: Scrub surfaces with brushes as needed

Step 3: Use a disinfectant as needed

Step 4: Rinse surfaces with clean water

Step 5: Remove standing/remaining water with a shop vacuum or pump

Step 6: Thoroughly dry structure to prevent mold growth

Tip: Using box fans in windows facing out of the house is one way of drying the structure