

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

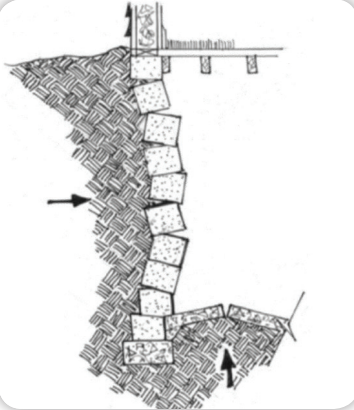
- Prior to entering any home after a flooding event, ensure the following is off:
 - Electrical Service
 - Fuel Lines & Gas Service
- Never use gasoline powered machines/tools (generator, pressure washer, etc.) indoors.

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



Picture provided by FEMA/Marilee Caliendo

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.

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

