



## Flood Information Sheet

If your home is flooded with water or a sewer backup, starting the cleanup and restoration as soon as you can will help to reduce the damage from the flood. The Detroit Health Department suggests that you contact a licensed plumber as soon as possible to begin the removal of water.

### Basic Safety Measures

These basic safety measures and cleaning tips for your home can help to keep you safe and healthy:

- Avoid skin contact with flood water, and keep cuts and sores clean and covered.
- Do not allow children to play in flood water.
- Do not eat or drink anything touched by flood water.
- Wash hands often with soap and paper towel and clean water, scrub for at least 20 seconds.
- **There is a strong risk of being injured by electricity as the flood water could cover electric outlets, surge protectors, or electrical powered devices. Do not step into water until the electricity has been turned off.**
- Wear rubber boots, gloves and an N-95 respirator mask (found at most home improvement stores) during removal and cleanup.
- Open windows if possible to dry the area. Fans can be used to help with drying.

### Mold

Things that are wet for two or more days, including carpets and rugs, can have mold growing on them, even if you can't see the mold. Mold can make the air in your home unhealthy and affect people with asthma, allergies or other breathing problems.

- Get rid of any dirty objects that cannot be thoroughly cleaned.
- Wash surfaces and items with warm, soapy water and disinfect by mixing 1/4 cup bleach per one gallon of water. Home or laundry cleaner can be used for items that would be damaged by bleach.
- Do not use ammonia. Ammonia mixed with bleach can create a deadly gas.

### Tetanus

Due to the likelihood of an injury after a flood, it is recommended that all responders and residents make sure that they are up-to-date with a tetanus shot. If you receive a cut, scratch or other wound, you should contact your doctor because other medicines or treatment may be needed.

### Follow these cleaning tips to help prevent disease and reduce property loss:

The Detroit Health Department recommends hiring professionals to do much of the restoration work, especially if you have health problems. If you want to do some or all of the work yourself, here are some tips:

#### Cleaning:

Discard any dirty objects that cannot be thoroughly washed or laundered including mattresses, and upholstered furniture.

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Detroit Health Department

3245 E Jefferson Avenue, Suite 100, Detroit, MI 48207

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*Michael E. Duggan, Mayor*



- Wash dirty surfaces and objects with warm, soapy water and clean with a bleach and water solution made of 1/4 cup of bleach per one gallon of water. For items that would be damaged by bleach, use a mild cleaning liquid.
- Make sure to read and follow label instructions. Do not use ammonia. Ammonia mixed with bleach creates a gas that could be deadly.

### **Carpets and Rugs**

If the damaged area is small, you may be able to save the carpet by cleaning the area with a mild cleaning liquid. There also are professional home cleaning services that may be able to clean your carpets. Carpets and rugs with severe water damage *must* be removed for cleaning or replaced.

### **Floors, Drapes and Furniture**

Scrub and wash all objects in the affected area of your home, including clothes, exposed to flood waters. Use warm, not hot, tap water with soap. Floors and hard surfaces should be cleaned by mixing 1/4 cup bleach per one gallon of water, or use a household cleaning liquid. A professional cleaner may be able to clean furniture and drapes.

### **Basement**

Pump out standing water and remove all trash. DWSD recommends that pumping be done by a licensed plumber. Wait to pump until floodwaters are below basement level. Strain away all liquids from trash. After straining trash, wrap in newspaper and store in tight-lid garbage cans until pick up. Paneling and wallboard must be immediately cleaned and dried thoroughly. If the damage is severe, they should be removed and replaced.

### **Food and Water Safety**

Throw away food exposed to dirty water. If refrigerators or freezers have taken in water, throw away food stored there. If no water entered these appliances, but power was lost long enough for foods to thaw, throw away all partially thawed foods unless prepared immediately. Discard milk, cheeses and other foods that may spoil. Thawed meats and vegetables should be discarded immediately. Discard all bulging or leaking canned food and any food stored in jars. Non-dented, undamaged cans can be wiped down on the outside of the can with bleach before use.

### **Other Resources**

To find referrals for food, shelter, medical assistance and more, talk to a community care advocate at the United Way for Southeastern Michigan by calling 2-1-1.

If you have specific questions about health risks due to flooding, please call the Detroit Health Department at: 313-876-4000.

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