Cleaning up after an emergency

Red Cross Emergency REDiPlan
Dealing with wind and water damage
After a flood or storm.
Your clean up.
What this book is about

Your house can be damaged by flood.

This book tells you how to

• stay safe
• fix your house
• clean up outside.

The Information in this book is general. It has good ideas for cleaning up. It may not always be right for you.

Think about what is best for you. you can ask
• your family
• your friends
• a Red Cross worker.
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Look after yourself

After a flood or storm you can

• get hurt
• lose your house
• lose people you love

or

• see bad things. For example,
  other people get hurt.

You will have different feelings.
It is ok to have these feelings. You can feel

• angry
• happy

or

• scared.

This is normal.
You need to look after yourself. For example,

- eat healthy food

- exercise

- get lots of sleep

- talk to people about what has happened.

For more information read

*After an emergency. Look after yourself* book.
Leaving your house

You may have to leave your house.

You must lock all the

• doors

   and

• windows.

You may need help.

Ask people who live near you.

Phone your

• friends

   and

• family.

Tell them you are safe.
When you can go home

Go home when

• the emergency service say it is safe

and

• you feel ready. For example,
  – you feel safe in your house
  – you are ready to clean your house.

Ask

• friends

  or

• family

to go back home with you.

They can help check your home is safe.
But

Leave your house *straight away* if you

- smell gas
- smell something burning
- see sparks
- hear a hissing sound. This can be a gas leak.

Leave your house *straight away* if your

- floors sag
  
  or

- ceilings sag.

Lock all the doors and windows.
Before you go home

You need to get

- food that will **not** go off.
  
  For example, food in a can

- clean drinking water.
  
  For example, a lot of water bottles

- your medicine.
  
  For example, get a new script filled at the chemist
• torch
• batteries

• petrol for your car

• cash from the bank.
Your safety

Wash your hands **before** you

- eat
- drink
  
  **and**
- smoke.

Use hand wash to kill germs.

Keep children **away** when you clean.

Some roads will have water on them.

Do **not** walk or drive on these roads.
Drink bottled water. Tap water can be dirty.

You may need to wee or poo on the ground.

Dig a small hole with a spade.

Cover this with dirt straight away.

Wear safe clothing. For example,

- boots
- long pants
- long sleeve shirt
- eye protection
- gloves.
Things to look out for

Power lines on the ground.

You must

• walk away
• tell the emergency service.

Sharp objects. For example,

• glass
• tin
• nails.

Branches that fall off trees.
Safety at your house

Your house may not be safe. For example,

• roof damage
• cracks in the wall.

Do not go in to your house.

Ask a building inspector to have a look.
Do **not** use electrical things.

For example,

- vacuum cleaner
- washer
- fridge
- drill
- chainsaw.

Do **not** use

- water
- gas
  - or
- electricity.

Get an electrician or plumber to check your items are safe.
Inside your house do **not** use

- petrol
- diesel
- gas. For example, for a
  - generator
  
    or
  - barbeque.

**Danger.** The gas can kill you.
Insurance

Your insurance company may give you money if something is
• lost
• stolen
  or
• broken.

To get money from your insurance you need to
1 take photos of the damage
2 tell your insurance company about the damage
3 ask the insurance company to come and look
Keep things that are broken or **not** safe.

Things from inside your house. For example

- chairs
- stereo
- dishes.

Things from outside your house. For example

- bike
- outdoor furniture
- lawn mower.
Your insurance company will want to see them.

You can keep a pile in your yard.

You may not get money from your insurance.

Talk to your council.

You may not have insurance.

Talk to your council.
Fix your house

When to get a tradesperson

You must talk to your insurance company first.

Ask your insurance company

- Will you pay for the work?
- When can you start to fix my house?

A tradesperson can fix your house. For example,

- roof damage
- a broken window.

You can get a

- builder
- plumber
- electrician
- window glazier.
Ask the tradesperson to write down how much the work will cost.

Your tradesperson must have a work license.

Build again

You may need to build your house again.

You need to talk to your council.
Dry your house

Water may come inside your house.
You need to dry your house.

Take wet things outside.
For example,
• mats
  and
• carpet.

Hose out mud.
Open

- windows
- and
- doors.

Water can get under your house.

A plumber can pump the water out.

Dry each room with a heater

Use **only 1** heater in each room.
Clean up

Wait for your water company to say your water is safe. Then you can clean
• inside your house
  and
• outside your house.

This part of the book has information about how to clean inside your house.

For example, there are ideas to clean
• clothes
• bedding
• books
• papers
• CD’s.
Clean inside your house

Your clean up kit.

You need a

• mop

• bucket

• broom

• cleaning product. For example,
  – laundry soap
  – detergent

• disinfectant. This kills germs. For example,
  – 1 quarter of a cup of bleach
    mixed with
  – 4 litres of water.

• rubber gloves

• face mask.
Use 2 buckets

1. Put clean water in bucket 1.
2. Put clean water and cleaning product in bucket 2.
3. Rinse you mop in bucket 1.
4. Dip your mop back into bucket 2.

Danger. Bleach is a strong chemical. You must read the label.

Clean everything more than 1 time.
You can clean some things by yourself.

For example,

- inside walls
- windows
- dishes
- furniture. For example,
  - chairs  
    and 
  - tables.

You need a professional cleaner to fix

- couches
- some wood furniture.
Throw out

• food
  and
• drink

that has been touched by water.

This includes food in a can.
You must read the label.
You need to
• take photos.

• know how much each broken thing costs.

Keep things that are broken or not safe.
Your insurance company will want to see them.
Keep a pile in your yard.

Ask your insurance company for money to replace them.
Clean your clothes
Clean your bedding

1. Check your washing machine is safe.
   If you can
   • drink your water
     and
   • the sewer works
   your washing machine will be ok.
2 Clean the inside of your washing machine

- Use hot water with disinfectant. Disinfectant kills germs

- Do not put clothes in the machine

- Turn your washing machine on.
  Do a full wash cycle.

3 Shake out dirt from clothes or sheets.

4 Hose off mud.
5 Use disinfectant.

- Some clothes can be cleaned with bleach.
  
  Bleach kills germs.
  
  Use hot water with bleach.

- Some clothes can **not** be bleached. Use
  
  - normal clothes washing cleaner
  
  **and**
  
  - pine oil cleaner. You can get this from
    
    the supermarket

Some clothes tags say dry clean only.

For example, a

- leather jacket

  **or**

- silk dress.

Take these clothes to a dry cleaner.
Clean other items

- Books
- Important papers
- Photos
- CD's
- DVD's.

You can

- get a professional to clean them
  or
- clean them yourself.
Clean books

You may not be able to clean your books straight away.

1  Rinse your books.

2  Put your books in a zip lock bag.

3  Put your books in the freezer.

4  Clean your books later.
Dry your books

1. Use a hairdryer.
2. Dry each page straight away.
   The pages may still stick together.
3. Dry the book some more.

Some books smell after they dry.
Put these books in a cool and dry place.

The books may still smell.
1. Put the books in a box. Leave the lid off.
2. Put the box in a bigger box.
3. Also put baking soda in the big box.
4. Put a lid on the big box.
5. Leave for about 3 days.
Important papers

For example, your

• birth certificate
• marriage certificate
• will.

You may not be able to clean your papers straight away.

1 Rinse your papers.

2 Put your papers in a zip lock bag.

3 Put your papers in the freezer.

4 Clean your papers later.
Dry your papers

1 Use a hairdryer.

2 Dry each paper straight away.

3 Photocopy your papers.
Clean your photos

Do not let your photos dry out.
They will stick together.

You may not be able to clean your photos straight away.
1 Put a piece of wax paper between each photo.

2 Put the photos in a zip lock bag.

3 Put the photos in the freezer.

4 Clean the photos later.
Clean your photos

1  Put the photos in a tub of cold water.
2  Shake the tub.

   This will shake the dirt off the photos.

Dry your photos.

1  Lay the photos on a paper towel.
2  Put the photos face up.
3  Do not wipe the front of the photo.
Clean CDs and DVDs

You may not be able to clean your CDs or DVDs straight away.

1 Rinse your CDs or DVDs

2 Put your CDs or DVDs in a zip lock bag

3 Put your CDs or DVDs in the fridge

4 Clean your CDs or DVDs later.

To dry your CDs or DVDs

1 Take the disk to a computer shop.

2 A computer shop can copy your CDs or DVDs onto another disk.
Clean up outside your house

You need to
• take photos

• know how much each broken thing costs.

Remember
You can ask your insurance company for money to replace your things.

Go to page 22 to read about insurance.
How to clean outside walls

Use

• water

• cleaning product.

Use a soft brush for wood walls.

Use a hard brush for brick walls.

There may be some small cracks.
This is ok. Bricks are strong.
If you are worried call a building planner.
Your barbecue

Ask a plumber to check the gas on your barbeque.
Wash your barbeque with

• disinfectant

  and

• hot water.

Your lawn

Your lawn will survive under water for 4 days.
Hose salt water off your lawn. You may need to get new lawn if there is 1 inch of mud.
Talk to your garden store about new lawn.
Stop Mosquitoes

Mosquitoes like lots of water.
You may get lots of mosquitoes in your yard.

To stop mosquitoes
Tip water out of
• buckets
• pots
• tyres.

or

tip cooking oil on the water.
Drain your

- gutters

  and

- ditches.

Talk to your council about how to stop them.
Keep a pile in your yard.

Call your council. They can

- give you ideas about how to clean your yard
- tell you how to throw out paint and poison
- remove branches
- remove dead animals
- take your rubbish.
This book is in Easy English.

The Communication Resource Centre

Call the Australian Red Cross to see the original book.

Cleaning up after an emergency. October 2009.

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