

WEST VIRGINIA BUREAU FOR PUBLIC HEALTH
PUBLIC HEALTH SANITATION DIVISION

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FLOOD SANITATION

HOME CLEAN-UP

Disease producing bacteria are often carried by flood water. These bacteria can remain alive and dangerous for long periods of time on items covered or exposed to flood water.

To protect your health while working in flood clean-up:

1. While working, keep hands away from mouth and face.
2. Disinfect all wounds and dressed immediately.
3. Wear protective clothing (rubber boots, gloves and eye protection).
4. Wash hands often using clean water and soap.

After the flood waters have receded:

1. Before beginning any cleanup activities make sure electricity and gas is turned off to the house. Follow the instructions of the utility companies relative to restoration of gas and electrical services.
2. Before entering any house or building that has been flooded, check for foundation cracks or shifting of the house on the foundation.
3. Drain or pump water out of flooded basements. (Don't pump out basements too soon after flood water has receded; the water soaked ground could cause the collapse of basement walls.)
4. Hose down all floors, walls and ceilings with clean water, both basement and house. This should be done before the surfaces dry, if possible.
5. Scrub all surfaces using soap or detergent and clean water (preferably hot).
6. Disinfect surfaces with a solution of laundry bleach (4 tablespoons of laundry bleach per one gallon of clean water).

Clothing and some furniture and household furnishings can be salvaged, but discard whatever cannot be cleaned and dried.

1. Furniture - Most wooden, metal or plastic furniture can be salvaged for use. First brush off all dirt and loose material. Wash all surfaces with soap or detergent and clean water (preferably hot). Dry thoroughly, preferably in open air and sunshine.
2. Mattresses and Stuffed Furniture - These items cannot be readily cleaned and disinfected; they should be destroyed.
3. Curtains and Draperies - Wash with hot water and soap or detergent. Dry thoroughly in open air and sunshine where possible. Professional cleaning is preferred.

4. Rugs - Flush with clean water while they are still on the floor. Shampoo with water and soap, then rinse and dry, preferably in open air and sunshine. If possible, have the rugs cleaned by a reliable rug cleaning firm. Permanently attached rugs or carpeting with padding cannot be cleaned in place.
5. Clothing - Wash all washable fabrics with hot water and soap or detergent. Dry thoroughly in the open air and sunshine or in an automatic clothes dryer. Professional cleaning is preferred, if possible.
6. Children's Toys and Beds - If children's beds, toys, cribs, playpens and playthings can be cleaned and disinfected, they can be saved. However, discard all toys which are absorbent and not easily cleaned and disinfected.*
7. Appliances - Refrigerators, stoves and similar appliances that contain insulation (polyfoam, rock wool, fiberglass) cannot be readily cleaned and disinfected in the insulated areas. Those that appear to be salvageable should be checked by a serviceman before being put back into use.
8. Cooking and Eating Utensils - Cracked or chipped utensils that are not easily cleanable must be discarded. As long as utensils can be cleaned and sanitized they can be saved.*

* Washed in hot soapy water, then rinsed with clean water and disinfected by submersing for at least one minute in a solution of one tablespoon of bleach per one gallon of water, allowing item to completely dry prior to use.