



Post Flood Home Re-entry

Emergency Measures Organization

16/05/2013

DO NOT return home until authorities say it is safe to do so.

It's normal for you to be anxious to return home as soon as possible after a flood, but there are several steps that need to be followed before your home is safe to live in. This checklist will help you make sure your home is restored to a healthy, safe condition.

When You First Return Home after a Flood

- Return during daylight hours when it's easier to see problems and potential hazards.
- Be alert for propane tanks, gasoline cans and oil tanks which may be floating or have been dislodged during the high water. Recover and safely store these when found.
- If the power was left on when you evacuated, DO NOT enter the house until it has been inspected by an electrician and you have been informed it is safe to do so.

If you see a downed power line, don't touch anything. Leave the area immediately and, depending on who provides service in your community, call:

**Yukon Energy (YEC) at 1-800-676-2843; or
Yukon Electrical (YECL) at 1-800-661-0513**

- Before going into a flooded building, check to be sure the foundation, roof and other supports are safe. If you must force a door open, stand outside the doorway in case the ceiling gives way.
- Watch for buckled walls or floors or holes in floors or ceilings, etc.
- Avoid dangerous debris, such as broken glass and loose wiring.
- Don't touch the electrical panel or use any appliances, pressure or heating systems until an electrician can make sure they are safe.
- Do not connect or use alternate power systems (back-up generators) to the house electrical system

YEC/YECL authorities will let you know when power can be restored to your home.

After the Flood

Use a flashlight (not an open flame) to check for damage inside.

Household items damaged in the flood must be discarded according to local regulations.

Your drinking water or septic system may be damaged.

Cleaning Needs

- rubber gloves, boots, protective eyewear or goggles
- shovels to clean up sludge and other debris
- pails, mops, sponges, rags
- plastic garbage bags
- big containers for wet clothes and washable bedding and a clotheslines to dry them
- unscented detergent and household cleaners (scented products may cause allergies or cling to food containers or other food preparation surfaces)
- disinfectant, such as bleach, for items such as cooking utensils, food containers and toys.
- If your well was overtopped by floodwater, it may not be operational and is very probably contaminated and should not be used for potable water.
- An alternate water source may also be required for cleaning purposes.

Other Clean-Up Equipment

- You may need extension cords, submersible pumps, wet/dry shop vacuums, carbon monoxide detectors, dehumidifiers, fans or heaters.
- Some generators and clean-up equipment can be rented, so check before you buy.
- If you're using gas-powered pumps, generators, pressure washers, etc., don't operate them in enclosed areas and make sure you use a carbon monoxide detector, even in semi-closed areas.
- When using electrical equipment, ALWAYS keep the cords out of the water.
- If you're operating electrical equipment in wet areas, wear rubber boots.

Hygiene/Safety

- Avoid direct contact with contaminated water and surfaces – wear rubber gloves and boots.
- When working in cold standing water, wear insulated clothing and rubber boots, take frequent breaks to warm up and change into dry clothing as often as possible.
- Don't rub eyes, mouth, ears or nose with contaminated rubber gloves.
- Don't expose open sores or cuts to contaminated water or surfaces.
- Wash all exposed skin often with soap and water and bath or shower with soap and water at the end of the clean-up day.
- Change cleaning clothes daily and wash contaminated clothes separately.
- Thoroughly clean surfaces used for food (counter tops, storage shelves, etc.) and areas where children play.
- Ensure the area you are working in is adequately ventilated.

BOIL WATER ADVISORY

To safeguard public health, residents who have private wells that have been or are likely to be affected by rising waters are advised to:

Bring water to a rolling boil **for at least two (2) minutes** prior to using it for;

- drinking,
- preparing food,
- beverages,
- infant formula,
- ice cubes,
- washing fruits and vegetables, or
- brushing teeth.

This advisory will be in effect until notified by the proper authorities.

The department of Environmental Health Services will provide lab testing free of charge. Contact them at 1-800-661-0408 ext.8391

Clean Up

- Get your house back in order as soon as possible, to protect your health and prevent further damage.
- Pace the clean-up activities and take frequent breaks.
- Think of clean up in stages:
 - Remove the water.
 - Remove dirt and debris (ex: sludge left over from floodwater).
 - Throw out items that can't be cleaned.
 - Thoroughly dry out the building and its contents.
- Keep children away from contaminated areas during clean up.
- Avoid contact with floodwater or anything that may have gotten wet, unless you're wearing protective gear.
- Consult Yukon Energy, Yukon Electrical or an electrician about using electrical equipment for drying, lighting or heating, including power
- Generators – they could be fire hazards if they've been exposed to floodwater.
- Remove all wet, dirty materials and debris from the building and put them in a large disposable container outside the house.

NOTE: Bleach can be used for some clean-up jobs. It should be handled with caution, using gloves and eye protection to avoid chemical burns.

DO NOT use bleach at the same time as other cleaners because the combination may cause toxic fumes.

Removing Water

Drain floodwater from your home in stages – about one-third of it daily. If the ground is still saturated and the water is removed too quickly, walls or floors could give way. Use pumps or pails to remove standing water, then a wet/dry shop vacuum to soak up the rest.

Heating and Appliances

- Have an inspector, electrician or qualified heating technician inspect your heating/air conditioning system and ducts to ensure they are safe to use.
- Flooded forced-air heating ducts and return ducts should be either cleaned thoroughly or replaced. Otherwise, they may spread mold spores into the air.
- After systems are inspected, keep your home cool (no more than 4°C (about 40°F) if possible) until all of the water is removed.

If you use pumps or heaters powered by gasoline, kerosene or propane, only use them in a well-ventilated area

- Do NOT use flooded appliances, electrical outlets, switchboxes or fuse-breaker panels until an electrician declares them safe.
- Follow recommendations made by an inspector about parts or appliance replacement.
- Replace flood-affected filters and insulation inside furnaces, water heaters, refrigerators and freezers. It may be cheaper to replace the appliances.

Floor Drains

- Flush and clean floor drains and sump pumps with unscented detergent and water. Scrub them to remove greasy dirt.
- Clean or replace clogged drains or hire a professional to do it for you.

Structures

- Rinse and then clean all floors as soon as possible.
- Replace any flooring saturated by floodwater or sewage.
- Clean all interior wall and floor cavities with water and unscented detergent.
- Open walls and remove drywall, panelling and insulation up to at least 50 centimetres (20 inches) above the high-water line.
- Wash all surfaces with unscented detergent and rinse well.
- Air out or dehumidify the house until it is completely dry.

Carpets and Furniture

- Dry carpets during your first two days back at home, and then clean them thoroughly. For large areas, hire a professional cleaner.
- If non-fabric furniture is only damp, let it dry and then brush the mud off.
- To test a material for dryness, tape clear food wrap to the item's surface. If the covered part turns darker than the surrounding material, it is still damp. Dry until this no longer happens.
- Hose off any dirt stuck to solid-wood furniture. Place furniture on blocks and run fans underneath it.
- Dry all wooden furniture by opening it up (drawers, doors) and airing it out.
- Throw out particleboard furniture, furniture cushions and coverings.

Clothing and Bedding

- Soiled clothing, bed linens and washable blankets (acrylic, cotton) should be washed with laundry detergent and warm or hot water. Use two complete washing cycles.
- Mattresses, box springs, futons, quilts, comforters, duvets and pillows cannot be adequately sanitized and should be thrown out.
- Scrape or hose off heavy dirt from washable clothing and let it air dry outside if possible.
- Soak badly soiled items overnight in clean, cold water and detergent.
- Non-washable clothing should be air dried thoroughly and then professionally dry cleaned.

Toys, Cooking Utensils and Food Containers

Follow these procedures for any items that may end up in someone's mouth or are used for preparing or cooking food:

- For pots, pans, cutlery, glasses, dishes, food storage containers, etc. wash thoroughly with soap and water (more than once if very dirty), rinse and then dip (30 seconds) in a solution of 5 mL (one teaspoon) of household bleach per one litre (four cups) of water and air dry.
- Alternatively, after washing and rinsing, everything (except for glasses) can be boiled for one minute and then air dried. Since dishes are easier to clean, a lower bleach concentration can be used and rinsing is not needed.
- For non-porous toys, a stronger concentration of disinfectant is usually needed with a longer contact time. Wash non-porous toys thoroughly with soap and water (disinfectant will not work if there is still visible dirt), rinse, then soak for five to 10 minutes in a solution of up to 15 mL (one tablespoon) of household bleach per litre (four cups) of water. Rinse well, then air dry.
- Cracked, chipped or hard to clean kitchenware should be thrown out.
- Throw out stuffed toys because they cannot be easily cleaned.
- After thoroughly washing, counters and food preparation areas can be wiped with a clean cloth soaked in 15 mL (1 tablespoon) of bleach per litre (four cups) of water to disinfect.
- Other disinfectants can be used instead of bleach, please follow the directions carefully.

Food and Medicine

- Undamaged canned goods which have been in contact with floodwater can be salvaged by removing the label and thoroughly washing with detergent, rinsing, then soaking for five minutes in a solution of 15 mL (one tablespoon) of bleach per litre (four cups) of water. Rinse with water, then air dry. After drying, the contents can be identified by marking the can with a felt pen.
- Food or beverage products with a screw cap, crimped-cap or similar containers cannot be safely salvaged and should be thrown out.
- Throw out all jars of home-canned goods and any damaged canned goods, even if they haven't been exposed to floodwater; bacteria and mold spores can be airborne.
- Get rid of any medicine, cosmetics and toiletries that have been exposed to floodwater.
- Throw out fresh food (meat, fruit, and vegetables) or food in boxes, bottles or damaged cans that have been exposed to floodwater.

Mold

Please follow this link to the CMHC document on mold:

http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/co/maho/yohoyohe/momo/maiprre/maiprre_002.cfm

Yard Work

Remember flood water may contain a wide variety of contaminants which may cause illness or infections. Avoid ingesting flood water or touching your face while conducting your work.

- Rubber boots and gloves are recommended for yard clean up as well.
- Remove any debris in your yard.
- To remove animal feces, or any dead animals found, use a shovel or heavy-duty, leak-proof rubber gloves, or several layers of leak-proof plastic bags. Carefully pick up the animal with your protected hand or shovel, place in a leak-proof bag, tie the bag and place into another clean bag. Dispose of the bag with your usual household trash. Wash your gloved hands and then your bare hands as soon as possible.
- Contact the department of Environment at 1-800-661-0408 ext.5652 if there are any larger animal carcasses.
- Do not reuse sand from sandbags for sandboxes or playgrounds.

Keeping Records

- Make sure you hold onto receipts for all expenses connected to clean up.
- Store important papers in plastic bags in the freezer during clean up, because freezer doors are usually sealed and they're more likely to stay dry and are less likely to be contaminated by mold.
- Take pictures or video of flood damage in and around your home.
- Register the damage with your insurance agent and damage inspectors as soon as possible.

Remember: Do NOT move back into your home until authorities have given permission to do so.