

# Flooded Basement Clean-Up Tips

If your basement contains water, do not remove it until the water pressure on the outside of the walls has been relieved to prevent the walls from being pushed in or the floors from heaving. Remove it slowly as floodwaters recede.

A general rule of thumb if the water is deep, is to pump out about one-third of the water per day.

Turn off the main power switch if basement level is above any electrical appliances, outlet plugs or wiring. Use the following precautions if power switch is located in flooded area:

- Stand on a dry wooden ladder or stool.
- Wear high rubber boots free of cracks or pinholes.
- Wear thick rubber or leather gloves, dry clothes.
- Have your hands and arms dry.

If practical, use a dry wooden or plastic rod to operate the switch; Do not use any material that contains metal.

Unplug all appliances. Carefully check the electric wiring and outlet plugs. Dry off wet appliances. Have a qualified electrician check the entire electrical system before using.

Once the basement is pumped dry, exposed surfaces should be scrubbed with mild soap and water and rinsed. Use a hose, start from the upper limit of flooding, and work down. Pay particular attention to surfaces that children can reach.

Floors and all surfaces that come into contact with floodwaters should be disinfected. It is suggested that a solution made from household bleach be used. To make the solution, add 1 tablespoon of household bleach to 1 gallon of water.

Start drying out the structure. Open doors and windows to increase ventilation. Open closet and cupboard doors and drawers. Electric fans may be used to improve air circulation for drying. Electric dehumidifiers can also hasten drying in an enclosed area.

If you have a gas or oil-fired forced air furnace, a heating serviceman should inspect the flooded components of the heating system. Debris lodged in passages could make operation dangerous, resulting in smoke, excess Carbon Dioxide, or poisonous Carbon Monoxide production.

A flooded hot water heater should be checked by an experienced repair person only. If the water supply has been contaminated, chlorinate the water heater tank after a pure water supply has been restored.

Carpets and rugs subjected to flood waters should be removed and cleaned. Discard heavily soiled carpets. In most cases, the padding must be discarded. Before removing your carpet, remove as much water as possible with a wet pick-up vacuum. Shampoo the rug with a mild detergent solution. Make use of fans to aid in drying carpets and rugs. Vacuum the carpet when dry.