

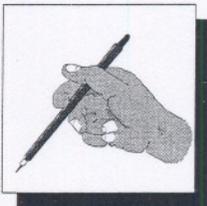
# READY or not?

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### SETTING CLEAN UP PRIORITIES



You survived the natural disaster! Now it's time to clean up the mess. Priorities will vary with the kind and the seriousness of the damage. After assessing the damage, you may only want to make temporary repairs until extensive work can be done.

Begin by taking a note pad and pen in hand, take a deep breath and list what needs to be done. After you have assessed the damage, set your priorities. List which repairs and clean-up you can do yourself. Next, list those things that are best left to a professional. Include a plan for removing debris from your property.

Always remember to follow safety rules for entering damaged buildings. Take photos of the damage for insurance claims and tax records. Be sure to keep records of all expenses.

#### Pay special attention to:

- Building structure: Check the roof and thoroughly inspect shingles, ridges, gable ends and eaves. Check the foundation for settling, cracking or undermining. Examine fireplace chimney for cracks or loose bricks, and walls, floors and windows. Determine what repairs are necessary.
- Sewage, water, heating systems: Examine carefully for signs of damage.
- Household contents: Determine what can be salvaged and what must be thrown out.
- Landscaping: Assess the damage to landscaping and make plans to remove any large trees in danger of falling near your home.



**DANR Publication ANRPO14.** The Emergency Preparedness Newsletter series was developed as a resource for individuals and families. Each newsletter addresses a specific topic to help you prepare for the next "natural disaster". Topics include "Planning for an Emergency"; "Safety"; "Food and Water"; "Considerations for Children"; "Finance and Insurance"; and "Clean-up".

# SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS DURING CLEANUP



1. Assemble a "bare essentials" first aid kit for minor injuries which may occur while cleaning.
2. Don't enter any building damaged by a tornado, earthquake, flood or fire until you are sure it is safe.
3. When entering damaged buildings, use flashlights only. Do not use matches, torches, or any open flame. Watch for gas leaks, undermined foundations, wet or falling plaster, holes in walls or floors, nails and splinters.
4. Set priorities. Accomplish the most important tasks first. Avoid physical overexertion.
5. Be sure children are safe and being cared for at all times. Never leave young children alone or allow them to play in damaged buildings or areas that might be unsafe.
6. Keep chemicals used for disinfecting and poisons used for insect and rodent control out of the reach of children.
7. Wear protective clothing on legs, arms, feet and hands while cleaning up debris. Wear rubber gloves while scrubbing flood-damaged interiors and furniture.

# SUGGESTED CLEANING SUPPLIES



*For all jobs*

detergents	bleach
disinfectants	ammonia
scouring powder	rubber gloves
strong boots or heavy soled shoes	



*For small jobs*

buckets  
scoops  
scrub brushes  
sponges and cloths  
small tools, i.e.  
crowbar, hammer, screwdriver



*For large jobs*

buckets • tools  
brooms & mops  
shovels • hoes  
water hose • wheelbarrow  
dolly • bushel baskets  
wash tubs (for soaking objects)

# TEMPORARY SANITATION



Until sewage absorption systems are back in normal working order, use a large container with a tight-fitting lid for a temporary toilet. Line the container with a plastic bag. After each use, add chlorine bleach or disinfect to stop odor and kill germs. If you have a chemical camper's toilet, use it until regular plumbing is restored.

## CHOOSING CLEANERS AND DISINFECTANTS



Household cleaners help remove dirt. Disinfectants help stop the growth of disease causing microorganisms carried in floodwater. Consider using powdered or liquid cleaner and disinfectants since large areas will probably need to be cleaned. They are more practical and less expensive than aerosol products.

All products are not suited for all uses. Read the label for specific directions or precautions. Make sure the products you choose will do the job you want them to.

Many products are harsh on hands so wear waterproof gloves. These products may burn eyes so avoid any contact with eyes. If you splash or spill any product on your skin, wash it off immediately.

## PLUMBING

Pour buckets of water into plumbing fixtures to flush out any debris that may be present and to be sure they are open. If you have a septic tank and suspect damage to the system, have the health authorities inspect the system.

## DISPOSING OF GARBAGE AND SEWAGE



Try to remove garbage as soon as possible to prevent rat infestations and other health problems. If local laws allow, some garbage can be burned. Biodegradable garbage can be buried in a hole 4 or 5 feet deep and covered with at least 2 feet of soil.

Damaged sewer systems are health hazards. Trained personnel in local environmental regulatory agencies will help with these problems. Problems with water purity, waste disposal or pest control should also be referred to them.

## DISINFECTING WELLS

Flooded wells should be disinfected before they are used as a source of drinking water.

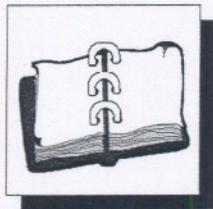
### *To disinfect a well:*

1. Scrub the pump room and wash all equipment, including piping, pump and pressure tank.
2. Remove the well seal at the top of the casing. Pour a solution of 1 quart of laundry bleach and 3 gallons of water into the top of the well. Pour the solution so it washes down the inside casing and outside the drop pipes. (In some wells, you only need to remove a plug from the seal to pour the solution into the well.)



3. Leave the solution in the well about 4 hours, then pump it into the pressure tank and distribution system.
4. Draw the chlorinated water into all piping by opening each faucet until the odor of chlorine is apparent. Leave the chlorine in the piping at least 2 hours. Then, run the water until the taste and odor are no longer objectionable.

# DECIDING WHAT TO SALVAGE



Before starting to salvage damaged clothing, bedding or furniture and accessories, decide which pieces are worth restoring. Consider each item individually and make your decision based on the extent of the damage; the cost of the article; sentimental value; and the cost of restoration.

Items damaged by flood waters need to be cleaned and dried out as soon as possible to prevent mildew. Disinfect when necessary. Pull up waterlogged rugs and remove drapes immediately to prevent further damage to the floor and walls. Dry out books and important papers slowly. If you prefer put each book or important paper in a sealed plastic bag in the freezer until you have time to deal with it.

During a fire, heat drives smoke into every accessible opening. It becomes deeply imbedded in textiles and other porous items. Smoke odor is very difficult to remove, even by professionals. It may be best to let the professionals come into your home to treat lingering smoke odor. Professional dry cleaning may or may not remove smoke odor from clothing, drapes and upholstery.

Your county Cooperative Extension Service may be able to advise you on methods for cleaning and repairing household items damaged by flood waters or smoke damage should you decide to do it yourself.

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