

# STORM AND FLOOD RECOVERY

## Household clean-up for after a flood or storm

- Remember to practice basic hygiene during any clean-up period. Wash hands thoroughly after participating in any flood clean-up activities.
- Wear suitable protective clothing including boots, gloves and eye protection while cleaning up.
- When cleaning up, consider your personal health - do not wait until you are thirsty to drink plenty of fluids. Take frequent breaks. Stay warm when it is cold and be careful not to overheat when it is hot.
- Do not touch your face and eyes while using disinfectants. Always follow safety advice on labels.
- Wash mud, dirt and debris from your house with a hose, starting at the highest point and working down to ground level.
- Where possible, remove all wet items such as floor coverings, rugs, mats, furniture, bedding, linen and clothing. If floor coverings are removed, thoroughly clean and dry the floor underneath before new material is laid.
- Be alert to snakes, spiders and rats that may have taken refuge in your home.
- Begin drying out the house as soon as floodwaters recede.
  - Open doors and windows during dry days.
  - Fans may also help.
  - Attempt to drain water away from under the house to increase airflow.
  - Check for trapped water and mud in wall or floor cavities.
  - Never use petrol or diesel-powered equipment (such as generators and pumps) in enclosed spaces.
- Each area affected by floodwater within the house needs to be cleaned, including empty refrigerators and cupboards.
- While cleaning up, be mindful of materials containing [asbestos](#) and take appropriate precautions.
- [Mould or mildew](#) may develop if items are not completely dried. Mould or mildew may be removed with household bleach, however the strength of the product may ruin some household items. Wear a mask when working with heavy mould.

### Specific clean-up advice

- Hard-surfaced floors, walls, benches and sinks should be thoroughly cleaned with hot soapy water and disinfected by wiping or spraying surfaces with a chlorine bleach solution or a product labelled as a disinfectant. Once disinfected, allow to dry.
- Linen, blankets and clothing should be washed in hot water (if instructions allow) or dry-cleaned.
- Flood-affected mattresses are difficult to treat and may need to be discarded.
- Foam rubber mattresses may be thoroughly washed with a garden hose. A detergent solution should then be squeezed through the mattress before allowing it to dry. Other types of mattresses or furniture, such as lounge chairs, may be air dried in the sun then sprayed thoroughly with a disinfectant solution. Consult a local furniture renovating company if you are unsure about their condition.
- Children's toys affected by floodwater should be discarded if they are soft toys or moulded toys with air injection holes.

- Solid toys should be washed and then disinfected.
- Floods may disrupt waste collection services. Contact your local council to find out how services in your area have been affected.

### How to make disinfectant

To make up a 10-litre bucket (standard size) of disinfectant, put on gloves, fill the bucket with water and then add one of the following:

- 50mls (quarter of a cup) of 4% chlorine (household bleach)
- 8-16mls (dessert spoon) of 12.5% chlorine (liquid pool chlorine)

Always follow safety advice on labels.