

# Flood Cleanup and Indoor Air Quality

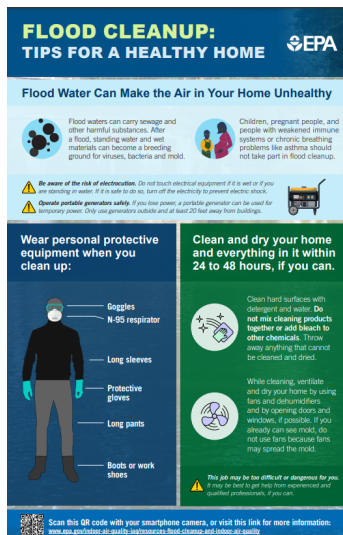
Floodwaters may contain many hazards, including biological and chemical contaminants. Following a flood or hurricane event, standing water and wet materials can become a breeding ground for microorganisms, such as viruses, bacteria and mold. Exposure to these contaminants can cause disease, trigger allergic reactions and continue to damage materials long after the flood.



Scan the QR Codes below to access each resource, or scan the code to the right to explore EPA's Resources for Flood Cleanup to Protect Indoor Air Quality webpage.

## Flood Cleanup: Tips for a Healthy Home

This document includes tips for safely and effectively cleaning up a home after a flood. It is available in several languages.



**FLOOD CLEANUP: TIPS FOR A HEALTHY HOME** EPA

**Flood Water Can Make the Air in Your Home Unhealthy**

Flood waters can carry sewage and other harmful substances. After a flood, standing water and wet materials can become a breeding ground for viruses, bacteria and mold.

Children, pregnant people, and people with weakened immune systems or chronic breathing problems like asthma should not take part in flood cleanup.

**Be aware of the risk of electrocution.** Do not touch electrical equipment if it is wet or if you are standing in water. If it is safe to do so, turn off the electricity to prevent electric shock.

**Observe portable generators safety.** If you use power, a portable generator can be used for emergency power. Only use generators outdoors and at least 20 feet away from buildings.

**Wear personal protective equipment when you clean up:**

- Goggles
- N-95 respirator
- Long sleeves
- Protective gloves
- Long pants
- Boots or work shoes

**Clean and dry your home and everything in it within 24 to 48 hours, if you can.**

Clean hard surfaces with detergent and water. Do not mix cleaning products together or add bleach to other chemicals. Throw away anything that cannot be cleaned or dried.

While cleaning, ventilate and dry your home by using fans and dehumidifiers and by opening doors and windows, if possible. If you already can see mold, do not use fans because fans may spread the mold.

**This job may be too difficult or dangerous for you.** If you need help or you need environmental and qualified professionals, if you can.

Scan this QR code with your smartphone camera, or visit this link for more information: [www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/health-effects-flood-cleanup-and-indoor-air-quality](http://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/health-effects-flood-cleanup-and-indoor-air-quality)



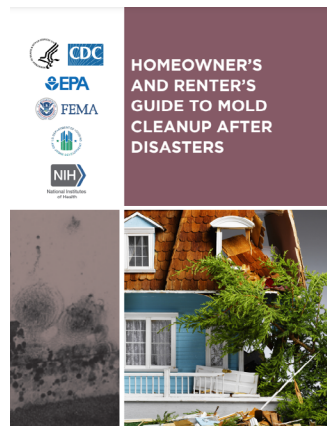
## Flooded Homes Cleanup Guidance

This website has a series of short how-to videos, infographics and more resources on cleaning up a home after a flood.



## Homeowner's and Renter's Guide to Mold Cleanup After Disasters

This guide summarizes basic procedures for mold remediation after flooding and other disasters.



**HOMEOWNER'S AND RENTER'S GUIDE TO MOLD CLEANUP AFTER DISASTERS**

CDC  
EPA  
FEMA  
NIH



## Flood Cleanup: Protecting Indoor Air Quality

This five-page brochure contains basic information on flood cleanup with illustrations and links to more detailed information.



**Flood Cleanup: Protecting Indoor Air Quality**

Flood water can make the air in your home unhealthy. This is because when things remain wet for more than two days, they usually get moldy. Breathing mold can cause serious health effects, including allergic reactions. Mold after late damage materials in your home. In addition, flood water may contain microorganisms, such as bacteria, or chemicals which may affect your health. As you clean up after a flood, other substances could get into the air or your home. These include carbon monoxide, lead, asbestos, and cleaning products, which may also affect your health.

This document describes indoor air quality (IAQ) concerns that you should be aware of after a flood (due to a flash flood or flooding after a hurricane). It provides tips to resources that can help you address these concerns as you and others clean up your home after a flood. Although this document will help you understand how to clean up, you should use it for other types of buildings. If your home is damaged by clean water (like pipe leak or rainwater intrusion), go to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) mold website for information on mold prevention and cleanup.

**Get Ready to Clean Up**

If you have evacuated, you and your family should wait to re-enter your home until professionals tell you it is safe, with no structural, electrical or other hazards. Before you start cleanup activities, contact your insurance company and take pictures of the home and your belongings.

The Homeowner's and Renter's Guide to Mold Cleanup After Disasters describes how to clean up after a flood. Following the cleanup steps will help you avoid many problems with IAQ. Remember—completely drying your home and removing water-damaged items are critical tasks during flood cleanup.

This job may be too difficult or dangerous for you. If you need help or you need environmental and qualified professionals, if you can. The Homeowner's and Renter's Guide to Mold Cleanup After Disasters provides tips for finding a qualified professional.

If you must do some tasks yourself, the Homeowner's and Renter's Guide to Mold Cleanup After Disasters is just one of the many resources available to you. You can find links to helpful resources from state and local government agencies and national nonprofit organizations at the end of this fact sheet. Detailed resources, such as "Fixing Your Mold Problem" from EPA and the National Center for Healthy Housing, are available on the EPA website. The National Center for Healthy Housing, explain flood cleanup, including topics that are not related to indoor air quality. For the latest news on mold and health, visit [www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq](http://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq). You also can find tips that can save you time and money as you plan your recovery.

**Protect Yourself From Carbon Monoxide Poisoning**

Use ventilation devices, such as portable generators, **OUTSIDE** and **NEVER** inside buildings.

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)



For more information about protecting indoor air quality during emergencies and disasters, visit EPA's Emergencies and Indoor Air Quality webpage by scanning the QR code to the right.

