

## Educational Bulletin

# You have been Flooded, now what?

Cleaning up after a flood can be a very tricky task. You want to preserve as much of your building and belongings as possible but you do not want to compromise your health. Contact with sewage and the potential for mold are important concerns. Wood Wyant has put together this informative booklet to help guide you through the clean-up process after a flood.

### HYGIENE

**Sewage and flood waters pose a serious threat to human health. During clean-up protect yourself from contamination.**

To help prevent illness during basement clean-up: wear protective clothing, rubber boots, and water-proof gloves.

- Remind yourself and your co-workers to wash hands frequently, especially before eating
- Avoid direct skin contact with contaminated water and surfaces
- Do not rub your mouth, eyes, ears, and nose
- Do not expose open cuts and sores to contamination
- Hang your clothes daily and wash contaminated clothes separately from others

### CLEANING FLOOD SOAKED CLOTHING AND BEDDING

- Flood-soiled clothing and bedding should be considered contaminated, and should be washed in hot water and detergent.
- Do not use your washing machine until your water is safe to drink and your sewer line is working.
- Mattresses, carpeting, futons, quilts, comforters, stuffed animals and pillows that cannot be adequately disinfected and should be discarded.

### Steps for Cleaning and Disinfecting Clothing:

- Separate wet items as soon as possible.
- Take clothes outdoors and shake off dried mud and dirt. Hose off extremely muddy items.
- Soak badly soiled items overnight in cold water and detergent.
- Wash clothes and linens in detergent and hot water if possible.
- Put washable blankets (acrylic, cotton) through two complete washing cycles.
- Air dry or use an automatic dryer at proper temperature settings.
- Wool blankets should be put through a dry cleaning process.



*Note: Clothing that cannot be washed in this fashion should be dry-cleaned. These items should be air-dried and taken to the dry cleaner as soon as possible. Furs and leathers should be taken in for a professional cleaning.*

### MOLD CONTROL ON SURFACES

*by Louis Anastasakos, Wood Wyant*

Mold is an opportunistic organism that is ready to exploit any environment that is continuously wet or damp. Mold is not only a surface visual problem but it can also become an indoor air quality problem since molds can be allergenic as well as cause illness. In areas where we expect this type of environment we normally use environmental materials that resist mold e.g. – a shower room.

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In many situations however we have accidental water exposure to materials not intended to be exposed to water. These surfaces can become damaged from this exposure as well as become contaminated with mold. If these surfaces become damaged and are no longer suitable for use they should be replaced – e.g. swollen or warped drywall should be cut out / replaced. Where the structure and integrity of the surface has not been compromised but mold is a problem, you can attempt to clean the mold.

Remember it is very important to dry these water damaged surfaces as soon as possible if mold growth is to be prevented and the damage minimized. Details on prevention and methods of cleaning can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/mold> and <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/healthy-living/flood-cleanup-keep-mind-indoor-air-quality.html>. This document also provides details on protective equipment for cleaners and building occupants and special handling techniques and equipment such as vacuums with HEPA filtration to remove mold contamination.



## Below is a list of surface types and what can be done to try and remove or control mold.

**Carpets** | If the mold contamination is very minor it may be possible to clean the mold out of carpet. Once the carpet has been extraction cleaned, a rinse with a quat disinfectant like **UltraQuat**, **Vert-2-Go ED**, **Generation 5 Plus** or **D-4055** should be able to eliminate the mold odour in this case. Use dehumidifiers if possible to speed up the drying time. In situations where carpet under pad exists this may be a problem because the under pad may hide mold contamination. If carpet under pad exists then serious consideration should be given to replacing the carpet and under pad. .

**Interior Construction Materials** | Drywall, wood, painted surfaces and other elements used to create the building interior may be porous and have the ability to absorb water. If these materials are warped or structurally unsound then they should be cut out and replaced. Exposed and unsealed decorative wood (e.g. baseboards or door frames) will also likely suffer from raising of the wood grain as well as discoloration so it is probably best that it gets replaced. If the water damage is light and materials are sound then the surface should be cleaned again with a powerful cleaner quat disinfectant such as **D-4055**. The surface should be dried right away after cleaning - use dehumidifiers or fans if necessary to speed up the process. Once clean and dry any surface to be decoratively painted should be sealed and prepared for painting by using a stain blocking sealing paint. Keep in mind that interior construction can be prone to air circulation within the construction itself. In this case the construction must be opened up to be dried and cleaned along with exterior elements of the construction to fix the problem. In this instance it may be easier to replace the damaged interior elements.

**Brick, Stone, Tiles and Grout** | These surfaces are porous and can be affected by mold but they are also very resistant to water damage and strong cleaning products. An alkaline chlorinated degreaser such as Wood Wyant's **Grizzly** can clean the mold from these surfaces and can remove the colour caused by the mold. Once the surfaces are dry there should no longer be a mold problem on these surfaces. The mold can return however if the moisture returns to these surfaces.

**Non-Porous Surfaces** | Steel, aluminum and glazed tile have no pores so any mold on these surfaces can be wiped away with any cleaner safe for the surface. After the area is dry, vacuuming with a wet/dry vac will remove excess water.



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**General Odours** | On many soft surfaces such as fabrics and carpets the odour of mold can be persistent in the area even after the cleaning away of the mold. The odour seems to stick to these surfaces even if they were not directly contaminated with mold. An odour counteractant such as Wood Wyant's **Vert-2-Go Bio Odour Control** can be very effective in trapping this odour and removing the problem. Be sure to spray the product onto these surfaces so that they are damp but not very wet. Use fans or building ventilation to speed up the drying process.

**Sources :**

<https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/floods/cleanupwater.html>

<https://www.epa.gov/mold>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/healthy-living/flood-cleanup-keep-mind-indoor-air-quality.html>

**City of Winnipeg:**

<http://www.winnipeg.ca/emergWeb/Flood/CleaningUp.stm>

## SUMMARY

Water damage that results in a mold problem can be cleaned up with many types of cleaners and equipment. Small areas with mold require less extensive techniques, products and tools than large areas with mold. If you need a disinfectant, be sure it has a Fungicidal claim on the label. Alkaline and bleach resistant surfaces can be best cleaned with chlorinated degreasers. However, care must be taken to properly clean up the mold with mechanical methods and ensure the source of the moisture is eliminated. If this is not possible then replacement of the mold damaged surface may be necessary to eliminate the problem.

## HOW TO WASH YOUR HANDS



**1. Wet hands**



**2. Dispense Soap into Palm of Hands**

*Scrub hands for 20 to 30 seconds (about the time it takes you to sing Happy Birthday twice in your head)*



**3. Rinse hands thoroughly**



**4. Dry hands thoroughly with paper towel**



**5. Use paper towel to turn off tap and open door**

