



Home Recovery What Comes Next?



Now that the initial steps have been taken to stabilize the condition of your home, take a breath, review, get organized, and plan your home's recovery. Pace yourself. Next comes the details.

Drying Tips

Continue the drying-out process. Lower the humidity by:

- Opening the house, weather permitting. If conditions are more humid outside the structure, opening it up may draw moisture into the home.
- Opening doors, cabinets, closets, and drawers (don't force them if they're swollen shut; open the back of dressers or similar furniture to air them out.).
- Using fans. Don't use the central air or heat if the vents were underwater until they've been cleaned.
- Running dehumidifiers.
- Using desiccants where there is little air movement (chemical packs, clay cat litter, etc.).
- There are also contractors that specialize in water damage restoration.

Be patient. Even after the surfaces appear dry, materials will not be dry all the way through. Beginning repairs, reassembly, or painting before the process is complete will **not** pay off.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE USE YOUR PHONE TO SCAN THE QR CODE AT LEFT TO VISIT THE CITY'S WEBSITE.



DEALING WITH DAMAGE

Drying Ceiling, Walls & Floors

Below are some general techniques for systematically drying out the ceilings, walls and floors of your home. Specifics will depend on what material they're made of.

Ceilings: Drain ceilings carefully. If wallboard ceilings were submerged by floodwater, it should be replaced. Unless there are too many sags and cracks, plaster ceilings will eventually dry out. Insulation should be removed to dry out joists.

Walls: Generally, baseboards should be removed to check the walls for water. Walls of some materials may need to have drain holes drilled between each stud. If necessary, drill a few inches above the floor to check for water or allow it to drain freely from each wall cavity between the studs. Remove insulation. Vinyl wall coverings retard the drying process and should be removed. Paneling should be pried away from the bottom of the wall to drain and dry out the walls beneath.

Floors: Floor coverings need to be removed so that air can circulate above and below to dry them out. That includes vapor barriers, insulation, etc. in crawl spaces below. Be sure to reinstall them when floors and foundations are completely dry.

Types of Materials

- Concrete block walls drain on their own and water won't damage them
- Wallboard. Water will wick up through wallboard, causing it to become soggy and fragile. Even after it dries, it is permanently contaminated from the inside out. Wallboard saturated by floodwater should be disposed of. If soaked by clean rainwater, it can be dried in place.
- Plaster should not have to be replaced, but it takes a long time to dry out properly. If it separates from the wooden laths, the wall will have to be replaced.
- Insulation

- Fiberglass batts can be removed and dried if soaked by clean rainwater.
- Cellulose should be replaced. It can lose its antifungal and fire retardant properties.
- Styrofoam actually holds up the best. It may only need to be hosed off.
- Wood dries out naturally and generally retains its shape. Wood posts and studs should not need to be replaced, if they are thoroughly dried out. Plywood and laminates can separate when drying. Saturated hollow doors usually come apart after a flood.

Now, as the drying out process continues, you can focus your attention on other areas.

Sorting the Contents

Whether you save it or discard it, document it.

Save: Move items that you want to save to a dry, safe location. The longer items remain in water, the more severely they will be damaged.

Discard: Move unwanted items to be discarded outside to dry until inventoried and losses documented. Things such as wall-to-wall carpets, carpet backing and pads, mattresses, and upholstered furniture can't really be disinfected. Usually they should be disposed of.

Garbage: Dispose of food that has thawed, was contaminated by floodwater, and/or anything that will spoil immediately. Seal it in plastic garbage bags or containers. Piles of garbage create a health hazard, so you'll want to dispose of them as soon as possible. Be sure to document losses and notify the adjustor that immediate disposal is necessary.

Restore Utilities

Depending on legal requirements, the extent of the damage, and your skill level, a professional may be required in some cases, or advisable in others.

Clean-Up Process

Every flooded part of the house and its contents will need to be cleaned and disinfected, including walls, floors, studs, and sills. Take 1 room at a time. Using a 2-bucket method works best; 1 with a cleaning solution and 1 for rinsing. Change out the rinse water frequently.