



After the Disaster Check List

The Restoration Industry Association (RIA) has these tips for individuals involved in cleaning efforts following floods, fires, tornadoes and other perils:

Immediately

- Notify your insurance carrier. Most policies require you to take reasonable action to prevent further damage
- Keep a notebook to track dates and times of conversations with individuals pertaining to your claim.
- Save receipts for meals, hotels, toiletries, replacement clothing, prescriptions, etc.
- Take photos or shoot video of each room for future reference and insurance claims. This will provide a digital inventory of some visible contents. Prepare a written inventory if possible.
- Remove any valuables if you are not staying in the house - jewelry, important papers (passports, licenses, insurance papers, birth certificates)
- Beware of scammers offering restoration services. Check references and visit the Restoration Industry Association website - www.restorationindustry.org - to find a contractor.

Safety

- Don't return home unless the proper authorities allow you back in.
- If electrical appliances, including televisions and computers are damaged by water, do not turn them back on when power is restored. This can result in electric shock and/or do further damage to the appliance. Electronics can often be cleaned & restored by knowledgeable contractors.
- Wear heavy rubber gloves or work gloves and thick-soled shoes, preferably not tennis shoes since there can be exposed nails, glass and other sharp objects.
- Only enter during daylight hours if there is no electricity.
- Leave immediately if you smell gas or the structure is unstable.

- If the power is off - turn the main breaker off and tape it down to prevent it from accidentally turning on when the power is restored.
- If you have fuel oil or propane, turn off the valve at the tank. Turn natural gas off at the meter.
- Stay out of rooms with sagging ceilings.
- Because you don't know what was in the water, treat all water affected surfaces and furnishings as toxic until properly decontaminated.
- Floods may force many creatures out of their natural habitats - beware of snakes, spiders and other reptiles and mammals that may take refuge in debris.
- When leaving, secure the building to prevent further damage.

Health Issues

- Pregnant women and people with health problems like asthma probably shouldn't be in the flooded area - check with your doctor.
- Keep a first aid kit handy.
- Tetanus shot should be current.
- Wash your hands frequently - especially before touching your face or eating.
- Avoid cross contamination - don't wear dirty clothes or shoes into the clean or undamaged part of a structure.
- Be careful reaching into muddy water - there can be sharp items, broken glass.
- Drink lots of water to stay hydrated.

Restoration

- Transport computers and musical instruments to a dry environment.
- Remove lamps, telephones & decorative items from wet furniture tops.
- In wet environments, open windows to ventilate the area. Open drawers and cabinets for interior drying, but don't force them open.
- Remove standing water from flat surfaces by sponging and blotting.
- Don't use bleach to disinfect since it is corrosive and can react with other substances. Use household disinfectants.
- Hard surfaces can be disinfected as well as some soft goods, depending on washability.
- Mold starts to grow in about 48 hours in a wet environment with humidity and a food source (drywall) - it is important to dry out as much as you can to prevent further damage.

- If the power is off for more than 24-48 hours, food in freezers and refrigerators will spoil and needs to be disposed of promptly.
- Drywall, insulation and carpeting/padding impacted by rain or flood waters will probably need to be removed and replaced.
- Wall cavities need to be dried out to prevent mold growth.
- Homeowners may hire any restoration company they choose and are not limited to only those suggested by an insurer.
- Restoration firms can help with drying structures and cleaning contents.
- You can hire any restoration company you choose.
- See if the restoration company is a member of their trade association and make sure to check references.
- Restoration Industry Association members abide by a specific code of ethics.
- You can find clean up tips, information on hiring a contractor, and general restoration & remediation information on the RIA website - www.restorationindustry.org