

Many of you experienced extensive flooding in your homes due to the recent storms. Here are some tips to help you get your homes back to normal.

Flooding due to rainwater entering your home:

- Open doors and windows to aid in the drying-out process.
- Use fans and dehumidifiers to remove excess moisture.
- Fans should be placed at a window or door to blow the air outwards rather than into the house, which will help prevent the spread of mold.
- It's a good idea to have your home heating and/or air-conditioning system checked and cleaned by a service professional experienced in mold clean-up BEFORE YOU TURN IT ON.

Flooding that involves sewer water:

- Sewer flooding not only creates an unpleasant odor, it can also cause contamination within your home. The drying out process can take several weeks in some enclosed areas and the growth of microorganisms will continue as long as the humidity remains high.
- To reduce humidity, open the house, and keep closet and room doors open as well.
- Fans, dehumidifiers and window air conditioners can be used to circulate the air, but whole house air conditioners should only be used if the system was not impacted by standing water.
- Steam clean and disinfect any salvageable items. Anything that cannot be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected should be thrown away.
- Cosmetics, stuffed animals and baby toys should be discarded. Contaminated mattresses, pillows upholstered couches, books and most paper products should be discarded because they soak up contamination and are difficult to disinfect.
- Contaminated carpets, carpet padding and rugs should be discarded.

Restoration after sewer flooding:

- If there is minimal damage and the overflow was cleaned up promptly, the damaged area might simply need to be cleaned and disinfected. Thoroughly wash and disinfect the walls, floors, closets. Common household cleaners and disinfectants can be used. MAKE SURE TO READ THE DIRECTIONS AND DO NOT MIX THE CLEANERS AND DISINFECTANTS TOGETHER, BECAUSE IT CAN PRODUCE HARMFUL VAPORS.
- While cleaning and disinfecting, make sure there is plenty of ventilation to reduce fumes.
- A mixture of one-quarter cup chlorine bleach in one gallon of water works well. This should be in contact with the item being cleaned for at least one minute. Rinse well and then wash again with soap and water. Rinse again.
- Items, including fabric, which cannot be cleaned with bleach, can be cleaned with an ammonia product, such as Lysol.
- If the damage was extensive, it might be necessary to remove and replace damaged wallboard and wall insulation. Wooden wall studs and sills probably won't need to be replaced but should be thoroughly cleaned, disinfected and allowed to dry properly.
- If the walls are paneled, the bottom of each panel should be carefully pried away from the wall. The paneling should be held away from the wall so the area between the wall studs can drain and dry out. Once disinfected and dried out, the paneling can often be nailed back into place.

There are many restoration and flood mitigation companies in the area that assist with cleanup. As always, do your homework before hiring anyone. And be aware that there is a huge demand for those companies right now, so availability could be limited.

If you need to dispose of household chemicals that were damaged by the flood, call our At Your Door Service. For \$15, you can schedule a pickup. Once you do, you will be given a plastic bag with instructions on how to package the materials. To schedule an appointment, call 800-HHW-PKUP (800-449-7587).

For detailed tips and information on cleaning up after a flood, go to:
<http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/CDPHE-EPR/CBON/1251645971558>.