

# Cleaning up after an emergency

Red Cross Emergency REDiPlan  
Dealing with wind and water damage



Easy  
English

# After a flood or storm. Your clean up.





## What this book is about

Your house can be damaged by flood.

This book tells you how to

- stay safe
- fix your house
- clean up outside.

The Information in this book is general. It has good ideas for cleaning up. It may **not** always be right for you.

Think about what is best for you. you can ask

- your family
- your friends
- a Red Cross worker.

**What is in this book.**

**Page number**



Look after yourself

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Clean up

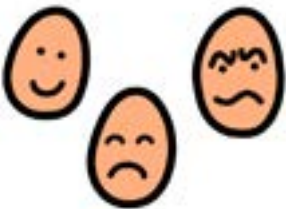
23



## Look after yourself

After a flood or storm you can

- get hurt
  - lose your house
  - lose people you love
- or**
- see bad things. For example,  
other people get hurt.



You will have different feelings.

It is ok to have these feelings. You can feel

- angry
  - happy
- or**
- scared.

This is normal.

You need to look after yourself. For example,



- eat healthy food



- exercise



- get lots of sleep



- talk to people about what has happened.



For more information read

**After an emergency. Look after yourself** book.



## Leaving your house



You may have to leave your house.

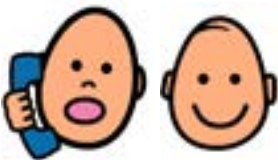
You must lock all the

- doors
- and**
- windows.



You may need help.

Ask people who live near you.



Phone your

- friends
- and**
- family.

Tell them you are safe.





## When you can go home

Go home when

- the emergency service say it is safe
- and**
- you feel ready. For example,
    - you feel safe in your house
    - you are ready to clean your house.



Ask

- friends
- or**
- family

to go back home with you.

They can help check your home is safe.



**But**



Leave your house **straight away** if you

- smell gas
- smell something burning
- see sparks
- hear a hissing sound. This can be a gas leak.

Leave your house **straight away** if your

- floors sag
- or**
- ceilings sag.



Lock all the doors and windows.

## Before you go home



You need to get

- food that will **not** go off.

For example, food in a can



- clean drinking water.

For example, a lot of water bottles



- your medicine.

For example, get a new script  
filled at the chemist



- torch
- batteries



- petrol for your car



- cash from the bank.



## Your safety



Wash your hands **before** you

- eat
  - drink
- and**
- smoke.

Use hand wash to kill germs.



Keep children **away** when you clean.



Some roads will have water on them.

Do **not** walk or drive on these roads.



Drink bottled water. Tap water can be dirty.



You may need to wee or poo on the ground.

Dig a small hole with a spade.

Cover this with dirt straight away.



Wear safe clothing. For example,

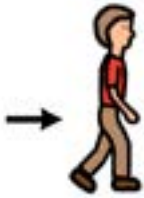
- boots
- long pants
- long sleeve shirt
- eye protection
- gloves.



## Things to look out for



Power lines on the ground.



You must

- walk away
- tell the emergency service.



Sharp objects. For example,

- glass
- tin
- nails.



Branches that fall off trees.

## Safety at your house



Your house may not be safe. For example,

- roof damage
- cracks in the wall.



Do **not** go in to your house.

Ask a building inspector to have a look.





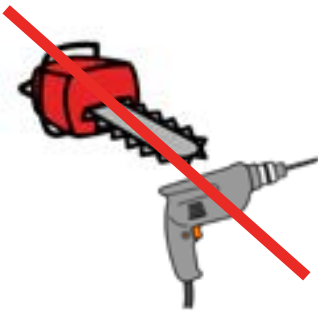
Do **not** use electrical things.

For example,

- vacuum cleaner

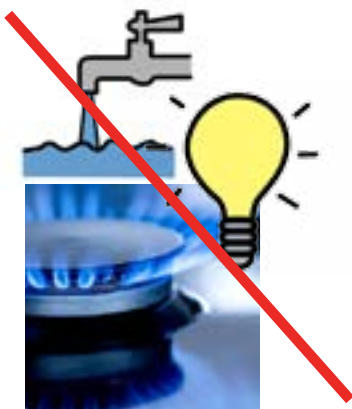
- washer

- fridge



- drill

- chainsaw.



Do **not** use

- water

- gas

**or**

- electricity.

Get an electrician or plumber to check

your items are safe



Inside your house do **not** use

- petrol
- diesel
- gas. For example, for a
  - generator

**or**

  - barbeque.



**Danger.** The gas can kill you.



## Insurance

Your insurance company may give you money  
if something is

- lost
- stolen
- or**
- broken.

To get money from your insurance you need to

- 1 take photos of the damage
- 2 tell your insurance company about the damage
- 3 ask the insurance company to come and look



Keep things that are broken or **not** safe.

Things from inside your house. For example

- chairs
- stereo
- dishes.

Things from outside your house. For example

- bike
- outdoor furniture
- lawn mower.

Your insurance company will want to see them.

You can keep a pile in your yard.



You may **not** get money from your insurance.

Talk to your council.

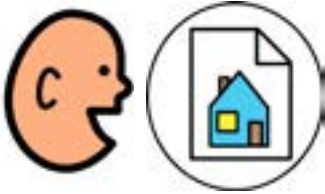


You may **not** have insurance.

Talk to your council.



## Fix your house



### When to get a tradesperson

You must talk to your insurance company first.

Ask your insurance company

- Will you pay for the work?
- When can you start to fix my house?



A tradesperson can fix your house. For example,

- roof damage
- a broken window.

You can get a

- builder
- plumber
- electrician
- window glazier.



Ask the tradesperson to write down how much the work will cost.



Your tradesperson must have a work license.



## **Build again**

You may need to build your house again.

You need to talk to your council.



## Dry your house

Water may come inside your house.

You need to dry your house.



Take wet things outside.

For example,

- mats
- and**
- carpet.



Hose out mud.





Open

- windows
- and**
- doors.



Water can get under your house.

A plumber can pump the water out.



Dry each room with a heater

Use **only** 1 heater in **each** room.



## Clean up

Wait for your water company to say your water is safe. Then you can clean

- inside your house
- and**
- outside your house.

This part of the book has information about how to clean inside your house.

For example, there are ideas to clean

- clothes
- bedding
- books
- papers
- CD's.



## Clean inside your house

Your clean up kit.

You need a



- mop
- bucket
- broom
- cleaning product. For example,
  - laundry soap
  - detergent



- disinfectant. This kills germs. For example,
  - 1 quarter of a cup of bleach  
mixed with
  - 4 litres of water.



- rubber gloves
- face mask.

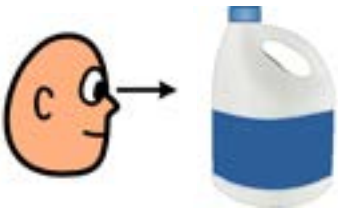


1

2

Use 2 buckets

- 1 Put clean water in bucket 1.
- 2 Put clean water and cleaning product in bucket 2.
- 3 Rinse you mop in bucket 1.
- 4 Dip your mop back into bucket 2.



**Danger.** Bleach is a strong chemical.

You **must** read the label.

2



Clean everything more than 1 time.



You can clean some things by yourself.

For example,

- inside walls
  - windows
  - dishes
  - furniture. For example,
    - chairs
- and**
- tables.



You need a professional cleaner to fix

- couches
- some wood furniture.



Throw out



- food

**and**

- drink

that has been touched by water.



This includes food in a can.

You **must** read the label.



You need to

- take photos.



- know how much each broken thing costs.



Keep things that are broken or **not** safe.

Your insurance company will want to see them.

Keep a pile in your yard.



Ask your **insurance** company for money to replace them.



**Clean your clothes**

**Clean your bedding**



1 Check your washing machine is safe.

If you can

- drink your water

**and**

- the sewer works

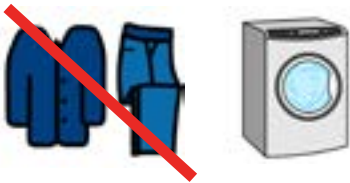
your washing machine will be ok.



## 2 Clean the inside of your washing machine



- Use hot water with disinfectant. Disinfectant kills germs



- Do **not** put clothes in the machine



- Turn your washing machine on.  
Do a full wash cycle.

## 3 Shake out dirt from clothes or sheets.



## 4 Hose off mud.



5 Use disinfectant.

- Some clothes can be cleaned with bleach.

Bleach kills germs.

Use hot water with bleach.



- Some clothes can **not** be bleached. Use

– normal clothes washing cleaner

**and**

– pine oil cleaner. You can get this from  
the supermarket



Some clothes tags say dry clean only.

For example, a

- leather jacket

**or**

- silk dress.

Take these clothes to a dry cleaner.



## Clean other items

- Books
- Important papers
- Photos
- CD's
- DVD's.

You can

- get a professional to clean them
- or**
- clean them yourself.



## Clean books

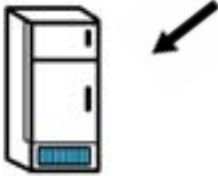
You may **not** be able to clean your books straight away.



1 Rinse your books.



2 Put your books in a zip lock bag.



3 Put your books in the freezer.

4 Clean your books later.



Dry your books

- 1 Use a hairdryer.
- 2 Dry each page straight away.

The pages may still stick together.

- 3 Dry the book some more.



Some books smell after they dry.

Put these books in a cool and dry place.

The books may still smell.

- 1 Put the books in a box. Leave the lid off.
- 2 Put the box in a bigger box.
- 3 Also put baking soda in the big box.
- 4 Put a lid on the big box.
- 5 Leave for about 3 days.



## Important papers

For example, your

- birth certificate
- marriage certificate
- will.

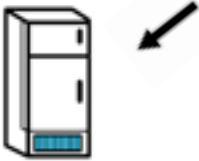
You may not be able to clean your papers straight away.



1 Rinse your papers.



2 Put your papers in a zip lock bag.



3 Put your papers in the freezer.

4 Clean your papers later.

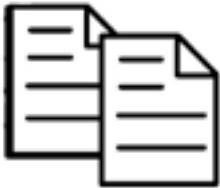


Dry your papers

1 Use a hairdryer.



2 Dry each paper straight away.



3 Photocopy your papers.



## Clean your photos



Do not let your photos dry out.

They will stick together.

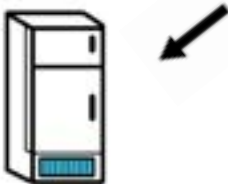


You may not be able to clean your photos straight away.

1 Put a piece of wax paper between each photo.



2 Put the photos in a zip lock bag.



3 Put the photos in the freezer.

4 Clean the photos later.



## Clean your photos



- 1 Put the photos in a tub of cold water.
- 2 Shake the tub.

This will shake the dirt off the photos.

## Dry your photos.



- 1 Lay the photos on a paper towel.

- 2 Put the photos face up.



- 3 Do not wipe the front of the photo.



## Clean CDs and DVDs

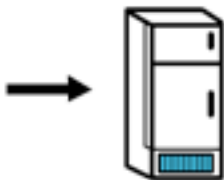
You may not be able to clean your CDs or DVDs straight away.



1 Rinse your CDs or DVDs

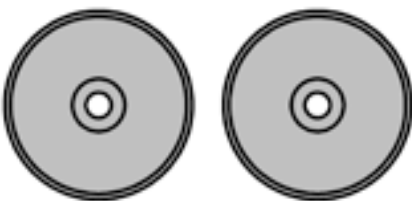


2 Put your CDs or DVDs in a zip lock bag



3 Put your CDs or DVDs in the fridge

4 Clean your CDs or DVDs later.



To dry your CDs or DVDs

1 Take the disk to a computer shop.

2 A computer shop can copy your CDs or DVDs onto another disk.



## Clean up outside your house



You need to

- take photos



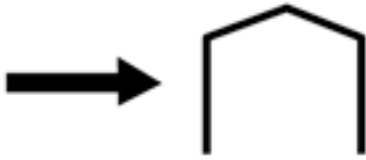
- know how much each broken thing costs.



### **Remember**

You can ask your insurance company for money to replace your things.

Go to page 22 to read about insurance.



## How to clean outside walls

Use

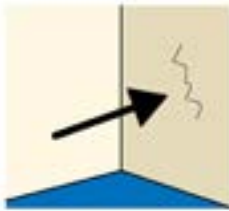
- water
- cleaning product.



Use a soft brush for wood walls.



Use a hard brush for brick walls.



There may be some small cracks.

This is ok. Bricks are strong.

If you are worried call a building planner.



## Your barbecue

Ask a plumber to check the gas on your barbecue.

Wash your barbecue with

- disinfectant
- and**
- hot water.



## Your lawn

Your lawn will survive under water for 4 days.

Hose salt water off your lawn. You may need to get new lawn if there is 1 inch of mud.

Talk to your garden store about new lawn.



## Stop Mosquitoes



Mosquitoes like lots of water.

You may get lots of mosquitoes in your yard.

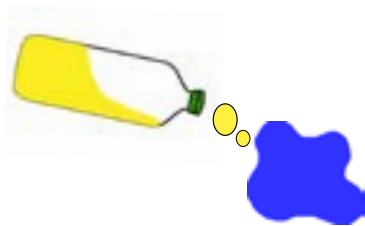
To stop mosquitoes

Tip water out of

- buckets
- pots
- tyres.

or

tip cooking oil on the water.





Drain your

- gutters
- and**
- ditches.



Talk to your council about how to stop them.



Keep a pile in your yard.

Call your council. They can

- give you ideas about how to clean your yard
- tell you how to throw out paint and poison
- remove branches
- remove dead animals
- take your rubbish.



This book is in Easy English.

The Communication Resource Centre  
Scope wrote the Easy English. August  
2012. Phone 9843 2000. [www.scopevic.org.au](http://www.scopevic.org.au)

Call the Australian Red Cross to see the  
original book.

Cleaning up after an emergency. October  
2009.

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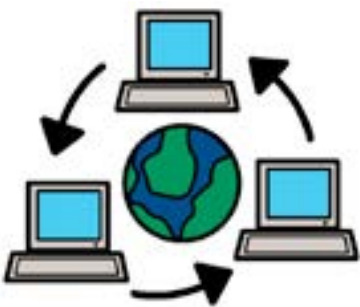
Australian  
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## More information



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