

Home clean-up after the storm

After a storm has passed, contaminated materials can cause health risks. If there is flooding along with a hurricane, you need to remove any water from your home as quickly as possible since the water may contain germs from overflowing sewage systems.

If there has been a backflow of sewage into your house, take these steps to ensure proper clean-up:

- Walls, hard-surfaced floors and many other household surfaces can be saved by cleaning them with soap and water and disinfected with a solution of one cup of bleach to five gallons of water.
- Thoroughly disinfect surfaces and items that come in contact with food and children's play areas.
- Wash all linens and clothing in hot water or dry-clean them.
- Items that cannot be washed or dry-cleaned, such as mattresses and upholstered furniture, must be thrown out or air dried in the sun and sprayed thoroughly with a disinfectant.
- Steam-clean all carpeting.
- Fiberboard, fibrous insulation and disposable filters in your heating and air conditioning system that have been in contact with floodwater or sewage should be replaced.
- Wear rubber boots and waterproof gloves during clean-up.

Be careful about mixing household cleaners and disinfectants, as combining certain types of products can create toxic fumes and result in injury or death.

It can be difficult to throw away items in a home, particularly those with sentimental value. However, saving items that have been soaked by sewage or floodwater may be unhealthy. In general, materials that cannot be thoroughly cleaned and dried within 24 to 48 hours should be discarded.

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