

# HOSING THE HOUSE AND ITS CONTENTS AFTER A FLOOD

After a flood, the mud left behind by floodwaters contains most of the health hazards you will face. It is very important to get rid of this mud as soon as possible. This is a lot easier to do before the mud dries out. Here are some steps to follow when hosing down your home...

1. Shovel out as much mud as possible.
2. *Make sure the electricity is turned off.* Unplug all appliances and lamps, remove all light bulbs, and remove the cover plates to wall switches and outlets that got wet. Check with your local building department to see if your code allows you to disconnect the wiring from the switches and outlets. If the code does not allow you to disconnect them, leave the wires connected and pull them out of their boxes. They can be replaced by an electrician. If the code does permit, it is probably best to throw away switches and outlets that were flooded and replace them with new ones.
3. Check your water system for leaks from pipes that may have moved. Even if your water supply is not safe to drink, you can use the water to clean the house. If you have water, hose the house down, inside and out. If you have an attachment that sprays soap, wash and then rinse the walls and floors. Hose the furniture, too, and other major items that got muddy.
4. Heating and air conditioning ducts that got flooded will have mud left in them. If you don't clean them out, your system will be blowing foul, dusty air that contains the same health hazards you are trying to get rid of. To clean the ducts, remove the vents or registers. If possible, remove some sections of the ducts in the basement or crawl space to give you access to all areas. Then thoroughly hose out all the ducts.
5. While you hose the walls, completely hose out the light sockets and electrical boxes that you opened up and prepared. Contact a professional before turning the electricity back on.
6. After you hose out the ductwork to remove the mud, wash it with a disinfectant or sanitizer, such as the quaternary or pine oil based ones. (Check labels for the contents and instructions.) If your ducts are in a slab or are otherwise inaccessible, have them cleaned by a professional.
7. Don't let the water sit for long. Use a mop, squeegee, or, if you have an outside source of power, a wet/dry vacuum cleaner.

*Other Very Important Health Precautions...*

- Assume that anything touched by floodwaters is contaminated.
- Wash hands frequently.
- Disinfect everything floodwaters have touched.