

CLEANING UP OUTSIDE AFTER FLOODING

WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

Floodwaters can carry a wide range of pollutants including micro-organisms ('germs', 'bugs') that can cause disease. Toxic chemicals may also be present. These pollutants originate from the ground surface, septic tanks, sewerage systems and industrial sites. They can contaminate food, furnishings, surfaces and any other articles that come into contact with floodwaters.

All items that have been in contact with floodwater should be treated with caution. Personal hygiene is very important to prevent the spread of communicable disease following flood events.

HOW DO I CLEAN-UP OUTSIDE?

GARDENS AND LAWNS

Contamination of the environment is more severe where sewage backs up or overflows directly from the sewer (piping) system. Contamination by floodwater is generally less severe.

If the outside area is grossly contaminated, with visible faeces, sanitary products or toilet paper, then lime can be applied to disinfect the area. Regular garden lime can be obtained from a garden shop. Follow the label instructions, especially warnings and cautions.

Sprinkle lime onto the area so the spill is dusted mostly white on the surface. After a day, use a hose or sprinkler to water the lime and residue into the soil. Let the area dry in the sun for a day before allowing access. If there is lime still visible, water it until the white dust has gone. Allow access after a further 24 hours.

If the area is not grossly contaminated, then restrict access (especially by children and pets) and use careful hygiene (washing hands, take care with footwear) over the next few days as harmful bacteria and viruses reduce in number, especially if exposed to sunlight.

Thoroughly wash and cook any vegetables taken from the garden.

CONCRETE AND HARD SURFACES

Concrete and hard structures can be cleaned directly by hosing or water-blasting. A suitable disinfectant or detergent can be used to clean the area. Follow the manufacturer's instructions.

PROTECT YOURSELF

Wear gumboots and gloves when cleaning. Make sure any cuts are covered with water proof dressing.

Thoroughly wash and dry hands after cleanup efforts and before food preparation, eating and drinking.

HOW DO I CLEAN-UP INSIDE?

An inspection team will be visiting all flooded buildings, and advice on cleanup will be given on a case by case basis. It will be possible to clean and disinfect some items, but others will need to be thrown away. Do not throw items away until advised to do so by an insurance assessor.

**KEEP LISTENING TO YOUR RADIO FOR INSTRUCTIONS,
INFORMATION AND ADVICE**

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