

Home Owner's Checklist Post-Flood Re-Entry

- Clearance to re-enter by Town Building Official (822-9156)

- Utilities
 - Has electrical service been exposed to water in basement?
 - Has electrical service been disconnected?

 - Has natural gas been shut-off?
 - Have natural gas/propane gas appliances been extinguished? If so, turn off gas.
 - If gas is smelled, notify emergency authorities (826-1100)
 - If gas is smelled, do not use electricity, light matches, smoke or do anything that can cause a spark until notified that it is safe to do so.

- Immediate re-entry of home
 - Do Not turn on power while standing in water.
 - If house been closed several days, open doors and windows and wait outside for 15-30 minutes to allow house to air out.

 - If utility power is out, do not use gasoline or propane powered dryers in enclosed areas.
 - Turn on dehumidifiers & fans to blow exhaust air outside to help drying out process.

 - Heating, ventilating & air conditioning systems which have been contaminated with flood water should be professionally cleaned.

- Cleaning a flooded house:
 - Keep children & pets out of area until cleaning complete;*
 - Remove standing water as soon as possible;*
 - Clean washable items in a washing machine with laundry detergent;*
 - Clean hard surfaces with soap & water;*
 - Use a wet-dry vacuum;*
 - Clean & dry carpets within 48 hours;*
 - Plaster & plasterboard that have been saturated should be removed & replaced at least 4" above water line;*
 - Mops, brooms & other items which have been used in clean up should be washed & disinfected. Use water & bleach or water & ammonia. Do Not mix ammonia with bleach or any other cleaning solution.*

□ Mold Growth

Assume mold growth if home has been flooded and closed for several days. Mold growth may be hidden under carpets, on backside of wall boards & in insulation. Molds can grow on most surfaces.

A “musty” odor or black/white specks are indicative of mold spores.

To control mold growth:

*Dry out house and repair moisture problems within home;
Stop water leaks, repair leaky roofs & plumbing;
Open windows & doors to increase air flow;
Make sure warm air flows through all sections of home;
Use fans in bathrooms, kitchens & laundry rooms;
Ventilate attic and crawl spaces;
Clean & dry damaged carpets, clothing, bedding & upholstered furniture;
Discard damaged furnishings;
Vacuum & clean home regularly to remove mold spores;
Check around windows for signs of condensation & water droplets. Wipe clean immediately.*

To clean up mold:

If large area, use a professional cleaning service; if you don't know such a company, check “Water & Fire Damage” pages in Yellow Pages;

If smaller area and you decide to clean on your own:

*Remove furnishings to a mold-free area;
Wear plastic/rubber gloves & breathing protection (masks);
Seal off area from rest of house. Open a window;
Bag moldy materials & tie off top of bag;
Scrub hard surfaces by first washing with mild detergent solution (i.e., laundry detergent & warm water);
Wipe surface with a solution of ¼ bleach to 1 gallon water; wait 20 minutes & repeat process;
Last apply a borate-based detergent and do not rinse. This will help in preventing mold to grow back. A borate-based laundry detergent or dish water detergent has “borate” listed as an ingredient on label;*

Give entire area a good cleaning, vacuum floors & wash exposed bedding or clothing.

□ Septic system (a/k/a ISDS; OWTS)

Sources to locate your septic system:

*Local installer or cleaner of septic system;
Local Building Official: 822-9156
R.I. Department of Environmental Management, Office of Water Resources: 222-6820*

Pumping Tank/ISDS during flooded or saturated condition?

Do not pump septic system during flooded or saturated conditions. It may cause tank to float out of ground & may damage inlet/outlet pipes;

Plug drains in basement;

Reduce water consumption.

After flooding conditions:

Do not drink well water until it is tested. R.I. Department of Health may be contacted (222-5600);

Avoid/limit use of septic system until water level is lower;

Have septic system inspected by local professional installer; signs of damage/failure include settling or inability of system to accept waste water;

Although septic tanks may not be damaged by flooding, their chambers can fill with silt & debris.

If septage/sewerage has backed up into basement, clean the area & disinfect the floor. A solution of chlorine bleach & water may be used to disinfect area;

Do not compact soil over septic system field by using heavy equipment; saturated soils are susceptible to compaction which can reduce septic system's field's ability to treat waste water and can lead to system failure;

Check vegetation over septic system and repair erosion damage.

Please note that whenever water table is high or your septic system is threatened there is a risk of backup into home. To reduce this risk, relieve pressure on system by less frequent use.

Do not open the tank while soil is saturated since silt and mud may be introduced into system;

Flooding may cause grease, fat and solids to float upwards in tank. This can cause blockage of outlets in system & back up into home.