EPA

Flood Cleanup and the Air in Your Home

EPA 402-K-06-006

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Air and Radiation
Indoor Environments Division
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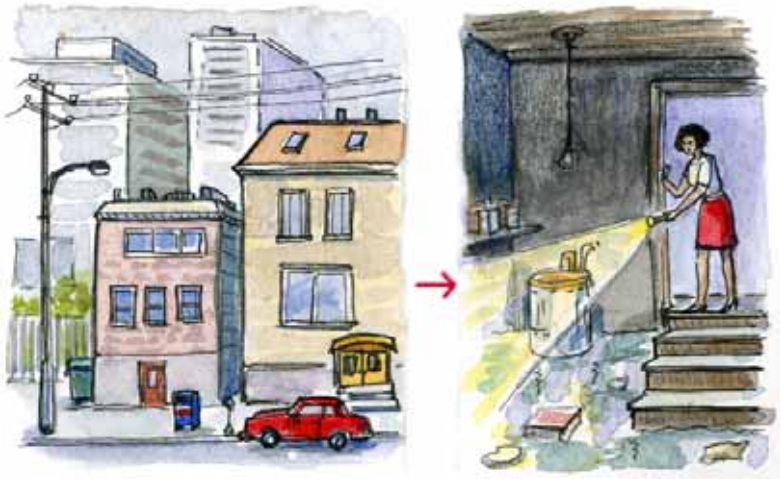
Washington, DC 20460

www.epa.gov/iaq

Flood Cleanup and the Air in Your Home

This booklet tells you how to clean up after a flood and how to prevent indoor air problems.

What can happen to the air in your home after a flood?



Flood water can make the air in your home unhealthy. This is because when things get wet for more than 2 days they usually get moldy. There may also be germs and bugs in your home after a flood.

Clean and dry your house and everything in it.

Mold may be more likely to make some people with asthma, allergies, or other breathing problems sick.

Talk to your doctor or another medical professional if you have questions about cleaning or working in a home that has been flooded.

If there is a large amount of mold, you may want to hire professional help to clean up the mold.

Clean and dry

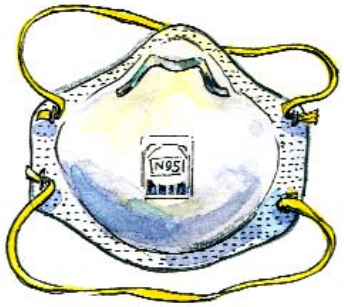
Clean up mold and germs from the flood water. Fix any leaking pipes and other water problems and then dry things, or the mold will grow again.

When cleaning

- Wear an **N-95 respirator**.
- Wear **goggles**.
- Wear **gloves** so that you don't touch mold with your bare hands.
- Wear long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, and boots or work shoes.

Choose goggles without vent holes, so the mold doesn’t get in your eyes.

N-95 respirator



N-95 Respirator

N-95 Respirator

Wear a respirator, an "N-95 respirator," mask over your mouth and nose, so that you do not breathe in a lot of mold. A respirator that protects against mold is called an N-95 respirator.

A dust mask or handkerchief will not protect you because mold can pass through it.

Handerchief
or Bandana

Dust Mask

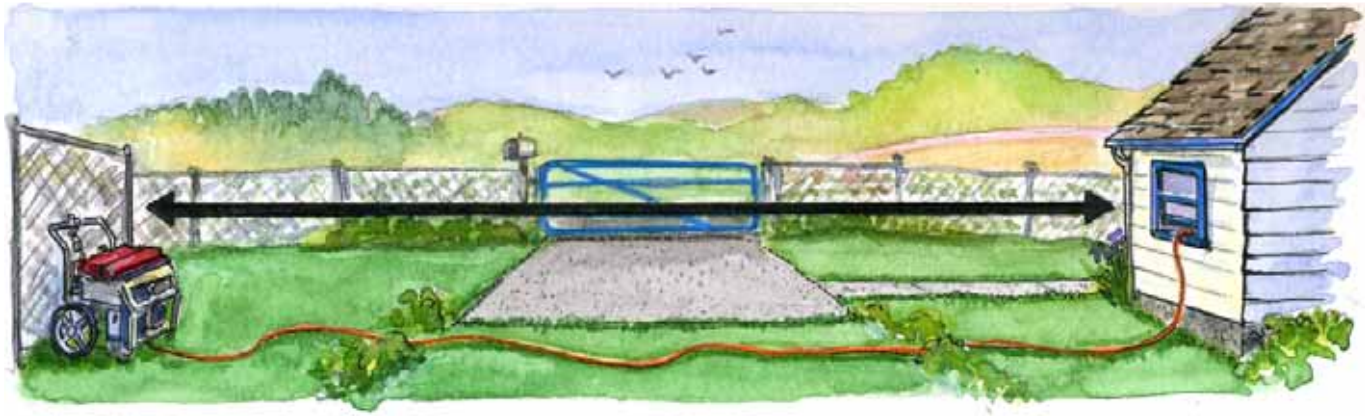
Hardware stores usually sell N-95 respirators. Only use a respirator that says N-95 on the package.

Throw away
anything that was wet
with flood water and
can't be cleaned.

Clean and dry hard surfaces such as showers, tubs, and kitchen countertops. If something is moldy, and can't be cleaned and dried, throw it away. Use a detergent **or** use a cleaner that kills germs.

Do not mix cleaning products together or add bleach to other chemicals.

Sometimes the power goes out after a flood. So, some people use machines called portable generators for electricity during flood cleanup.



Portable Generator

The exhaust, or fumes, from a portable generator could kill you in minutes if you breathe it in! Use portable generators **OUTSIDE** and far away from buildings.

Do not use portable generators inside your house or garage. Do not put portable generators on balconies or near doors, vents, or windows. Do not use portable generators near where you or your children are sleeping.

Do not use a portable generator:

near a window.

in your home.

Do not use a portable generator:

between buildings that are close together.

in a garage.

on a balcony.

in a carport.

For more information contact the

- **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**

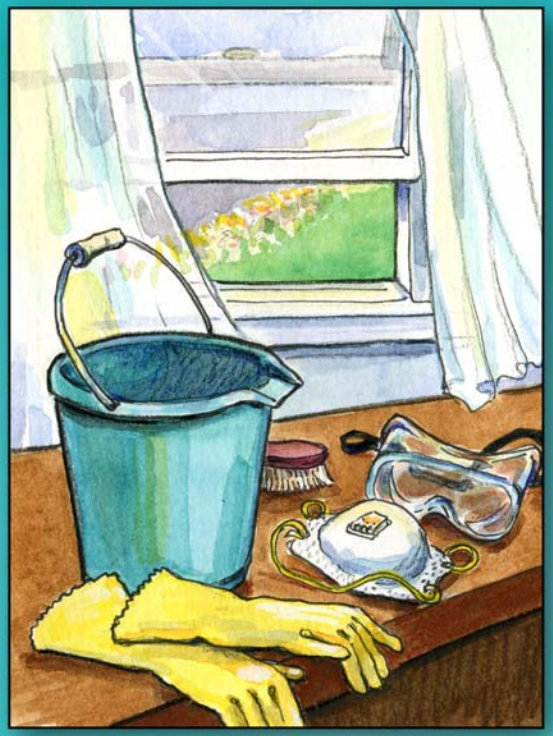
To get *free* brochures or talk to a person about indoor air and floods, call EPA's free hotline at

- **1-800-438-4318**

To get information from EPA on the Internet, go to

- **www.epa.gov/iaq/flood**
  for this booklet and more indoor air information
- **www.epa.gov/naturalevents/flooding.html**
  for flood information
- **www.epa.gov/hurricanes**
  for hurricane information

To get more information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on the Internet, go to

- **www.bt.cdc.gov/floods**
  for flood information
- **www.bt.cdc.gov/hurricanes**
  for hurricane information

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