



**IICRC**  
Institute of Inspection Cleaning  
and Restoration Certification

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **How to Clean Up after a Flood**

When the rain stops and flood waters retreat, what's next? The IICRC offers educational tips for summer storm season

(Vancouver, Wash.) June 19, 2014—With [forecasters predicting](#) a more severe and dramatic storm season in 2014, home and business owners should be prepared for any type of weather. To help home and business owners recover from a flood, the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning, Restoration and Certification (IICRC) has prepared a quick-reference guide for flood cleanup tips.

“When it comes to storms, education is essential,” said IICRC Chairman Tony Wheelwright. “We want to make sure homeowners and business owners have access to these materials so they are able to act quickly and correctly when the time comes.”

Below is a list of tips from the IICRC:

- **Before the storm.** If a storm in your area is imminent and you are at a high risk for flooding, make sure you are prepared. Before the storm hits, gather valuable items or documents and store them in a secure, dry place. Clear all debris from gutters and downspouts and check your sump pump to ensure it is working properly. You will also want to remove items from lower floors or raise them up off of the floor to help minimize damage to property.
- **Consider safety.** Prior to entering any storm or flood-damaged building, be wary of structural integrity and other safety hazards such as falling debris or shock hazards. Make sure to shut off all electricity in the affected areas, even if the electricity is down, as it is oftentimes restored without notice.

Also, make sure that you have the proper personal protective equipment and try to stay out of floodwaters as much as possible to further reduce the risk of injury. Items such as protective clothing, sturdy shoes, gloves, eye protection and even an organic vapor respirator (paint respirator) can protect you from exposure to dangerous microorganisms that can grow quickly.

- **Work quickly.** Even though it can take mold a few days to appear, anything that can be done to control or minimize its speed of growth is vital. Mold thrives in moist environments with stale air, organic food sources (paper, wood, etc.) and temperatures between 68° F and 86° F. To reduce these risks, keep air moving by opening windows and doors. Fresh air discourages the growth of mold and other microorganisms and can also help reduce inhalation risks.
- **Clean and disinfect everything.** The first step in the cleanup process is to remove and dispose of all, wet porous components such as mattresses, pillows, molding, insulation and portions of damaged walls. This also includes floor coverings such as carpet, pads, laminate, tile and sheet vinyl. Wood flooring should also be removed to expose wet saturation pockets underneath and allow for proper drying, cleaning and sanitizing. Other items such as wet clothing, furniture and household fabrics can usually be salvageable after a hot machine wash, a lengthy detergent soak and the liberal use of a disinfectant solution.

Structural areas such as wall cavities, studs and other fixtures will also need to be properly disinfected. This can be done by pressure washing with detergent solutions working from top to bottom.

- **Dry it out.** The next step is to allow the space to dry thoroughly before reconstruction. This is possibly the most difficult step for home and business owners because even if a surface feels dry to the touch, that doesn't mean it is. Dryness is very difficult to measure and often requires a professional moisture assessment. Beginning your reconstruction before your space is thoroughly dry can cause dry rot, ongoing structural damage and negative health effects.

In most cases, the above procedures may require the assistance of a professional. Water damage restoration companies employ trained technicians who specialize in cleaning, biocides, extraction, drying and moisture measuring. Make sure, however, that the company you choose has proper licensing, liability insurance and employs trained technicians in water restoration services.

“Severe flooding is one of the most devastating natural disasters for a home or business owner because of the level of destruction it creates,” added Wheelwright. “Not only does it destroy your property, but it has the ability to bring contaminants into your home, making it unsafe and unlivable until properly inspected and cleaned.”

As an international nonprofit organization, the IICRC is dedicated to providing advice to property owners on proper and safe clean-up, and providing certification to professionals in water damage restoration. To find a list of certified restorers in your area, call the IICRC hotline at (800) 835-4624, or search online at [www.iicrc.org](http://www.iicrc.org).

For more information on storm damage restoration recommendations from the IICRC, contact Jennifer Petersen at 312-664-1532, [jpetersen@mulberrymc.com](mailto:jpetersen@mulberrymc.com), or visit [www.iicrc.org](http://www.iicrc.org).

**About IICRC**

The IICRC is an international, ANSI-accredited standard-development organization (SDO) that certifies individuals in 20+ categories within the inspection, cleaning and restoration industries. Representing more than 54,000 certified technicians and 6,000 Certified Firms in 22 countries, the IICRC, in partnership with regional and international trade associations, represents the entire industry. The IICRC does not own schools, employ instructors, produce training materials, or promote specific product brands, cleaning methods or systems. For more information, visit [www.iicrc.org](http://www.iicrc.org).

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