

Cleaning up outside after a flood

Introduction

Red Cross has a long history in helping people before, during and after an emergency. The Red Cross Emergency REDiPlan Project aims to provide people with quality advisory information to help them recover from an emergency.

This information sheet is one of a range of products provided in good faith to assist people recover from floods. If you **do not feel confident** in undertaking these tasks you should always seek the advice of professional services.

Before undertaking these tasks you should always contact your insurer.

Where to start

Cleaning up will take quite some time, and often there are other priorities before tackling the outside of the house. But you should also think about varying your clean up schedule to provide some variety. Also being outside can be a welcome relief from tackling tasks inside.

Make sure you have good protective equipment, strong boots, long pants and long sleeves, eye protection and gloves. If it is cold, dress appropriately for the cold, or if it is warm, ensure you are sun smart.

Check when your council will be providing hard garbage collections or other assistance with waste disposal.

Ask some friends or family to help. Put on a BBQ for them.

The Shed

The shed will have many hidden treasures and delights and only you know the contents of it. Make sure that all paints and poisons are safely and appropriately disposed of.

Electrical tools should be checked by a licenced electrician before use.

Hand tools should be dried, a hand drier will help. Use a lubricant water repelling spray such as WD-40 to get into hinges and joints.

Sporting equipment can be cleaned using normal cleaning products and ensuring that they are disinfected.



The BBQ

Have a licenced plumber check the gas fittings for the BBQ. Clean and disinfect the BBQ plate and . Wash and rinse thoroughly

The Yard

As you get rid of things from your home, don't turn your yard into a dump. Food and garbage must be hauled away as soon as possible. Other discarded items should be removed as soon as your insurance adjuster has told you how to make sure their loss is covered.

Mosquitoes can carry many diseases, and a flood can create ideal conditions for them to breed. Drain or remove standing water that can become a breeding ground. Dump water out of barrels, old tires, and cans. Check that your gutters are clean and can drain. Ditches and drains also need to be cleaned so they can carry stormwater away from your home.

If you can't get rid of standing water, use a commercial product that kills mosquito larvae but does not harm other animals. A slightly less effective method is to apply a thin film of cooking oil on the water. Repeat the application within a few days after a rain has disturbed the film.

The Lawn

Lawns usually survive being underwater for up to four days. Salt water should be hosed off the lawn and shrubs. Some grasses are not damaged by saltwater flooding. Check with your local nursery, or your garden store, You may have to replace the lawn if there was mud thicker than one inch deep, erosion, or chemicals in the floodwaters.

A final reminder

Remember, recovery is a long and sometimes tiring process. So you should make sure that you look after yourself. For further advice on looking after yourself, see our booklet ***Coping with a major personal crisis***

Further Information

www.redcross.org.au