



Repainting After Flood Damage

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.

Some frequently asked questions

Is it repaintable?

Yes. If there is no permanent damage to the substrate, ie the plaster, brick work or timber work.

When can I repaint?

When the surface being repainted is clean and free of unsound contamination

How long will it take to dry out adequately before painting?

It may take up to one or two months, depending on the weather conditions and the airflow.

How can I make it dry faster?

- Open all the windows when it is dry outside.
- Use fans to create good airflow.
- A high air flow will take moisture away rapidly and prevent mould growth. This is of paramount importance.
- If the humidity is high and/or if there is poor airflow, drying will not progress and mould may grow.

How do I clean the surface before painting?

Remove loose dirt, dried mud etc with a stiff bristle brush, then wash the surface with sugar soap followed by a clean, fresh water rinse.



How do I seal the water stains before painting?

In most cases apply a coat of sealer to the cleaned, sound surface. An alternative is an oil based undercoat. (Paint will blister if not dry enough).

How do I prevent mould from growing?

- Ensure everything is dry and clean before painting.
- Again, use fans to ensure good airflow removes the moisture.
- Clean the questionable surfaces with household bleach which contains hyperchlorite. This will kill any mould already growing.
- Use a fast acting mould destroyer which comes in a convenient, easy to use, trigger pack.
- Use mould resistant Low Sheen or Semi Gloss acrylics are specially designed to resist mould in dry, well ventilated areas. Your hardware or master painter will be able to provide advice on these products;

What if smelly odours do not disappear?

- Most of these odours are due to decaying material of some sort, so clean more thoroughly and use fans to boost airflow inside the building.
- Vanilla essence/commercial air fresheners/perfumed disinfectant (detergent free) can relieve these odours to some degree (baking soda).

Summary

- Clean the surface of contaminants, dried mud etc with a stiff bristle brush/non metallic scouring pad/wide blade scraper. Vacuum away dust.
- Wash the surface with sugar soap and then afterwards with clean, fresh water.
- If mould may be a problem, wash with household bleach which contains Hyperchlorite.
- Dry out thoroughly (less than 5% measure moisture).
- Seal water stains with a sealer in most cases, when completely dry.
- Ensure the surface is sound and not permanently damaged e.g. Walls have not lost their shape, plaster and wall fillers are not loose or crumbling.

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