



HURRICANE PREPARATION, EVACUATION AND RECOVERY

Checklist: How to clean up water and mold after a hurricane

It's important to dry out your home and everything in it as soon as possible to help prevent mold.

Before you start

- Take digital pictures or video of damage to your home and your belongings. Include pictures of the make, model and serial number for items like appliances and electronics.
- Wear proper protective gear, such as rubber boots, breathing protection, rubber gloves, goggles and head cover.
- Don't run your heating or air-conditioning system if you know or suspect that it was flooded with water. It could spread mold throughout your home. Consider having it inspected by an HVAC professional and include your air ducts.
- To prevent carbon monoxide poisoning, use generators outside and away from windows and doors.
- If there's a moldy area larger than 3-by-3 feet, consult the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\) guides](#). If it's smaller, you can try cleaning it yourself.

When you're ready to clean up

- Remove water from floors, carpets and hard surfaces using a wet vacuum.
- If you have standing water in your basement and can pump the water out yourself, make sure you do it gradually to avoid structural damage. If the water is pumped out too quickly, pressure from the wet soil outside could cause basement walls to collapse.

- Clean up thick mud and dirt.
- Open attic access to allow air flow. Watch out for falling debris or objects.
- Open interior doors, cabinets and windows, including closets and interior rooms, to let air flow to all areas.
- Remove drawers to let them dry.

Important tips to consider

- When electricity is safe to use, use fans and dehumidifiers to dry out the area.
- Use a bristle brush and soapy water to scrub surfaces.
- Always follow the instructions on the label when using bleach or any other cleaning product.
- Use a bleach solution to kill mold on surfaces. Make sure you're using no more than 1 cup (8 ounces) of bleach per gallon of water.
- Dry surfaces quickly and thoroughly after cleaning.
- If there's a need to remove carpet, wallpaper or drapes, keep a sample. Your insurance adjuster will need it when they do your inspection.
- Check gutters to ensure downspouts still funnel water away from your home. Make sure they're not clogged with debris in case there's more rain.