

## **Flood Water Damage and Recovery to Buildings**

If flood water has affected your property the damage and amount of material which will need to be removed may be extensive.

Check for any structural damage to your property and if you think there is damage or danger seek advice from your insurers and/or a builder. Any confirmed or suspected dangerous structures should be reported to the district council's Building Control team on 01636 650000.

Items such as plasterboards on the walls, ceilings and insulation under the floor, within the walls and above ceilings may have become damaged beyond repair and should be removed to minimise further damage to the overall structure.

It will be necessary to start the drying process throughout the structure as quickly as possible by ventilation. This will require the opening of all doors, both interior and exterior, and opening of all windows, to allow the maximum amount of air movement throughout all rooms.

The movements of air throughout the structure can be supplemented by the use of fans and air conditioning. Do not use heater to assist in drying out the structure as they can cause the humidity inside the structure to increase rather than decrease and will also promote growth of mildew etc.

### **Basic clean-up procedures**

After the water has receded enough to the point that it is no longer standing in your property the removal of wet and soaked materials can begin and the clean-up procedure get underway. It is suggested that you wash down all surfaces.

It is also advisable to take photographs and make notes describing the damage prior to removal and as the removal process proceeds to assist in any subsequent insurance claim.

### **Floors**

Immediately remove the carpet throughout the structure. Carpets that have been soaked with flood water should be discarded as leaving the carpet inside will prevent the overall drying process of the remainder of the structure.

Wood flooring and wood sub-flooring can also be damage the building as it absorbs water and cause wood to swell. When wood flooring or sub-flooring becomes wet and cannot be dried out rapidly or adequately, the flooring will swell and buckle. Generally, wood floors and wood sub-floors will need to be removed and replaced.

### **Doors and Cabinets**

Doors and cabinets are both generally constructed of wood, which will swell and become unusable with time. Also, many cabinets are made of plywood or particle board, which will delaminate or come apart with time. Doors other than solid wood are also made with veneers. The problem of delamination of plywood and doors will not appear for several days, but will be obvious when the plywood or door begin to peel away from the substrate.

## **Foundations and External Walls**

In extreme cases or fast flowing flood water the foundations should be checked to verify that the flood waters have not exposed or damaged the foundations. Older buildings and homes have masonry and brick foundations.

Visually inspect the around the perimeter of the property and ensure mortar has not been washed out of any joints between the bricks and block.

If a significant amount of mortar has been lost but the foundation is still intact structurally, the missing mortar can be replaced. To do so, use a loose mortar poured into joints to refill the voids and re-establish the overall structural integrity of the foundation. It is advisable to have a professional check the extent of damage to foundations if you do find that mortar has been washed from between the joints.

Properties that have elevated floors should have all the perimeter vents opened to allow for much cross-ventilation and movement of air in the crawl space as possible. This is necessary to adequately dry out the floor joists and floor sheathing from the underside in an effort to minimize the amount of damage to the floor joists as well as the wood sub-floor throughout the structure.

## **Gas Pipes**

Water can collect in gas lines, causing the pilot light for appliances, heaters and water heaters to burn improperly, and in some cases go out. Gas can escape if there is a faulty valve or thermal couple. The gas system within the structure should be checked, and appliances checked to ensure it works properly.

## **Electricity**

Electrical systems should be thoroughly checked, especially if the water rose above the wall outlets. Silt can collect in these and cause short circuits. Also check all light switches and light fixtures for water if the flood waters were high enough to reach them. Precautions should be taken when checking the electrical systems and a professional electrical engineer should be called in if there is any concern or question regarding the condition.

## **Appliances**

Most appliances have the electric motor mounted very low to the floor, so even a small amount of water in the structure can cause damage to motors and bearings. Do not attempt to use these appliances until the motors, their controls and elements have been checked by qualified personnel.

## **For more information or guidance contact**

Newark and Sherwood District Council Building Control 01636 650000

Environment Agency 0800 807060

Severn Trent Water 0800 783 4444

Gas 0800 084 1880