

INSURANCE

- Phone building and contents insurance companies as soon as possible.
- The insurance company will confirm what repairs and replacements are needed and covered by your policy.
- Ask the insurance company how long it will be before the loss adjustor visits.
- Ask the insurance company if you are to clean your property or if they will get a company to do it for you.
- If you rent your property, contact your landlord and your contents insurance company as soon as possible.
- Photograph and video record your damaged property. List the damage to your property and belongings.
- Use a permanent ink pen to mark on the wall the maximum height of the flood water – do this in every room affected by flooding.
- Make a note of all phone calls. Record the date, name and what was agreed.
- Keep copies of all letters, emails and faxes you send and receive. Keep receipts.
- Don't throw anything away until told (except ruined food).
- If you do not have insurance, contact Northern Midlands Council who will be able to provide information on charities that may be able to assist you.



IN THE YARD

- Drain or remove standing water as soon as possible to prevent a breeding area for mosquitoes.
- Dump water out of barrels, old tyres and cans.
- Check gutters are clean and can drain.
- Clean ditches and drains so they can carry stormwater away from your home.
- If you cannot get rid of standing water talk to your Council Environmental Health Officer about obtaining a commercial product that kills mosquito larvae but does not harm other animals. Alternatively apply a thin layer of cooking oil to the water.
- Clean and disinfect the BBQ plate and wash and rinse thoroughly. Have a plumber check the gas fittings before operating.
- Dispose of paints and poisons safely.

Temporary housing

Flood repairs can take weeks or months to complete, especially when there is widespread flooding and builders are scarce. It takes time to dry out a property and some buildings have to be gutted before repair. The Department of Health and Human Services can assist with temporary accommodation if you are unable to stay with family or friends. If you are to be in a temporary property for some time, think about having your mail redirected.

For more information

Northern Midlands Council
13 Smith Street, Longford 7301
Phone: (03) 6397 7303
Fax: (03) 6397 7331
Email: council@nmc.tas.gov.au
Website: www.northernmidlands.tas.gov.au

Tips on what YOU should do AFTER a flood



HAZARDS ON ENTERING YOUR HOME

Wait until authorities have declared the area safe before entering a flood zone.

- Take care as there may be hidden dangers in the flood water like sharp objects and pollution.
- Wear rubber boots (or rubber soled shoes), long pants and sleeves and rubber or leather gloves. Flood water can contain sewage, chemicals and animal waste – wear your rubber gloves at all times when clearing up after a flood.
- Move slowly around and carry a torch to inspect for damage. Pay particular attention to any loose floor boards, holes in the floor, protruding nails and sagging ceiling areas that may be ready to fall.
- Also keep a look out for other flood ‘victims’ such as spiders and snakes.
- Check with Aurora whether electricity supplies to your property have been affected and if they are safe to be turned on by you. **DO NOT touch sources of electricity when standing in flood water. EVERY SOURCE OF ELECTRICITY CAN BE EXTREMELY DANGEROUS UNDER FLOOD CONDITIONS. DO NOT turn on any lights or appliances until a qualified electrician has checked your entire electrical distribution system.**
- If the water supply has been flooded, you must assume it is contaminated. Drink only boiled or bottled water until the the normal supply has been declared safe by health authorities.



CLEANING YOUR PROPERTY

- Check whether your insurance company will get a cleaning company to do this for you (see overleaf).
- If cleaning the house yourself, clean one room at a time and make sure you work in a well-ventilated area. Apply cleaner and give it time to work before you mop it up. After cleaning a room go over it again with a disinfectant to kill the germs and smell left by the flood water.
- When flood levels outside your property start to become lower than inside, you can begin using a pump and generator to remove water from your home. Position the generator outside in the open air as generators produce noxious fumes which can kill.
- Wash out mud, dirt and debris from your home. Start at the top or upper limit of the flooding and work downwards to the floor.
- It is important to thoroughly wash and disinfect every item and part of your home that has come into contact with flood waters because of contamination. To be on the safe side, consider all items exposed to flood waters as contaminated.
- Any food touched by flood water is ruined and should be thrown out (even jars, canned and bottled goods) – including anything in your fridge or freezer ruined by loss of power.
- Thoroughly wash your hands with a disinfectant soap after handling any contaminated article.
- Use household or commercial disinfectants or sanitisers. A good disinfectant to use is a solution of quarter of a cup of household laundry bleach to every four litres of water.
- If you are drying your property naturally, keep doors and windows open as much as possible. Drying can also be assisted by the use of fans and heaters, but keep windows open, and only use one heater per room (too much heat can cause timber to crack).
- Mattresses soaked with flood water are generally damaged beyond use and should be discarded (check with your insurance company before discarding).
- Clean clothing by shaking, brushing or vacuuming loose dirt from the articles before washing or sending to the cleaners.
- Sanitise the washing machine occasionally after washing items contaminated by flood water to kill bacteria on the interior surface. Pour a disinfectant into the empty machine, then complete a 15 minute cycle on a hot water setting.
- Wall to wall carpeting will be hard to dry. If you leave it on the floor it could cause wood decay, mildew and warpage of the flooring and hinder drying. However, if you remove the carpet you risk shrinkage – seek advice from a professional cleaner.
- Clean and disinfect dishwashers, washing machines and dryers with water that has been declared safe for drinking. Make sure the sewerage and stormwater lines are working before starting a dishwasher or washing machine. Hand wash crockery and cutlery in disinfectant and allow to air dry, or alternatively use a hot setting in your disinfected dishwasher.
- Fridges and freezers should be cleaned, disinfected and checked by a professional or replaced before use.
- Allow furniture to dry outdoors but keep it out of direct sunlight to prevent warping or fading.
- Don't let photos dry out, they will stick together. Try and get to flood damaged photos within two days to prevent mould. Place them in a tub of cold, clear water and gently separate any that are stuck together. Do not allow water from the tap to run directly on the photos, as this may further damage them. Place photos face up on a kitchen towel. Do not wipe the wet emulsion of a photograph.
- Place books on end to dry and keep the leaves apart. If books are very damp, sprinkle with cornflour or talcum powder between the leaves to take up the moisture, leave for several hours and then brush off. Repeat if necessary. After exposure to air for some time, pile and press them to keep the leaves from crumpling. Continue the drying pressing procedure until they are dry to prevent mildew. Heat can be applied between the pages to prevent musty odours.
- Don't rush into repairs until the timber and brickwork has had a chance to thoroughly dry (and check with your insurance company first).

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLEANING FLOOD DAMAGED PROPERTY

PRODUCT / PROBLEM	RECOMMENDED
Cleaners	Household all purpose cleaner Laundry soap or detergent
Disinfectants	Commercial disinfectants 1/4 cup of laundry bleach with 4 litres of water
Mildew removers	Commercial mildew removers Washing soda, tri-sodium phosphate 1/4 cup of laundry bleach with 4 litres of water
To remove mildew on wood	4-6 tablespoons of baking soda with 5 litres of water. Dry away from sunlight in an airy place.
To remove mildew on leather	Wipe with cloth wrung out of diluted household bleach. Dry away from sunlight in an airy place. When dry, rub with saddle soap. Use fine steel wool (lightly) or a suede brush on suede when dry. Rinse leather and suede jackets in cold water and dry away from heat.
To remove mildew on upholstered articles	Sponge lightly with thick suds of soap or detergent and wipe with a clean, damp cloth. Use as little water as possible on the fabric.
To remove rust stains from timber	Treat with bleach.
Mud on walls	Water, detergent and a good stiff nylon or bristle brush.
Locks and hinges	Oil promptly to prevent rust.
White salt growth on brickwork	Brush off with a bristle broom when completely dry.