

## CLEANUP INSTRUCTIONS

The City of Columbus does not assist with cleanup of private property. Please check the Yellow Pages phone book under “house cleaning – interior.” To do it yourself, after the water recedes, follow these instructions:



- Move items out of the flooded area as soon as possible.
- Allow wet items to air-dry as quickly as possible to prevent rot and mildew.

- Open doors and windows. If your furnace or air conditioner is safe to use, turn it on to assist in drying. Also use fans and dehumidifiers if possible.
- Remove all toxic chemicals such as pesticides from the flooded area to prevent further contamination and the mixing of chemicals.
- Wash down concrete or brick walls, floors, faucets etc. that have been under water, first with clean water, then soapy warm water. Sweep water and sediment down the drain or to the pump.
- Disinfect all areas and equipment that came into floodwater contact with a solution of 8 tablespoons of liquid chlorine bleach to a gallon of water. Let everything air dry.
- To clean washable fabric items, brush off dirt and residue before washing, according to the instruction label, in hot or warm water, with bleach if possible.

- Foam rubber mattresses and pillows can be washed, disinfected and air-dried in the sun. If in doubt that an item can be cleaned properly, it is best to discard it.
- Flush and disinfect floor and sump pump drains using undiluted chlorine bleach.
- If your basement is finished with drywall and it became wet, it is best to discard and replace that portion to avoid the growth of mold. Some wood paneling may be salvagable if you can clean and dry it properly without it becoming warped.
- If you have carpet and it became wet, please contact a professional carpet cleaner for advice on if it can be cleaned and dried properly. In severe flooding situations, it may be advisable to discard all carpeting.
- **REMEMBER: NEVER MIX BLEACH WITH AMMONIA – THE FUMES PRODUCED TOGETHER ARE TOXIC.**

# WHAT TO DO IF YOUR BASEMENT FLOODS



## Basement flooding cleanup instructions

**Division of Sewerage and Drainage  
Sewer Maintenance Operations Center  
1250 Fairwood Avenue  
Columbus, OH 43206  
(614) 645-7102**

**Columbus Health Department  
240 Parsons Avenue  
Columbus, OH 43215  
(614) 645-6764**

[www.cityofcolumbus.org](http://www.cityofcolumbus.org)

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**City of Columbus  
Department of Public Utilities  
Division of Sewerage and Drainage**



Michael B. Coleman, Mayor

*The downside to having a basement is that it can flood. A variety of factors can cause basement flooding, such as private property drainage issues, a public or private sewer blockage from grease or tree roots, or a heavy rain that infiltrates into and overwhelms the sewer system. The following instructions should be followed for cleanup of a sanitary sewer backup from the basement drain for health and safety reasons. Some tips may also apply for cleanup of interior stormwater flooding.*

## WHAT TO DO FIRST

In the event of a sewer backup into your basement from the floor drain, please call the following 24-hour number as soon as possible:

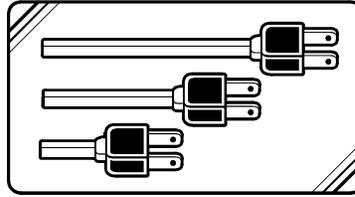
Division of Sewerage and Drainage  
Sewer Maintenance Operations Center  
**645-7102**

A crew will be dispatched as soon as possible to check the nearest city sewer for a blockage or other problem. If the problem is found to be in the private property service line, for which the owner is responsible for maintaining, you will be advised to call a private plumbing company. If you are unsure about the source of the problem, it's best to notify the city first.

If the problem turns out to be related to the city's sewer, you may be eligible for the city's new **Project Dry Basement** backflow prevention program. After reporting the problem to SMOC, if your property is eligible, you will receive an application in the mail. For more information, call 645-7176 for a fact sheet or visit our web site at [www.dosd.org](http://www.dosd.org).

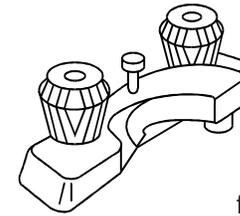
## IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

Because dealing with a flooded area can be dangerous, extra safety precautions should be taken. When in doubt, contact the City of Columbus Health Department. Please follow these safety tips:



- Because electrocution is always a danger in a flooded basement, wait until the water recedes before you begin cleanup. If you decide to walk in the water, the electricity must be shut off at the main box.
- Since flood water may be contaminated with sewage, wear rubber boots and gloves to minimize skin contact. Do not smoke, eat or touch your face while in a flooded area. If you receive an open wound while working in a flooded area, seek medical attention immediately.
- Do not allow children or pets near the flooded area.
- Remember that flooded areas will be slippery, even after the water recedes.

**If you have homeowners' or renters' insurance flood or sewer backup coverage, don't forget to notify your insurance company.**



- In almost all cases of basement flooding, city tap water will remain safe. However, whether you have city or well water, do not turn on the faucets below flood level until the water recedes. If you think that your well may have been contaminated, call the Columbus Health Department. Do not use water that may be unsafe for any reason. To disinfect, boil in a clean container for at least two minutes.
- If a gas odor is present, do not touch any electrical fixtures, telephones or switches – any spark may ignite the gas line. Leave immediately, leaving the doors open to ventilate, and call the Fire Department and the gas company from a safe place. Do not light a match or use any open flame on your way out.
- If the furnace or other appliances became wet, have them inspected by a qualified service technician before using them. Turning on wet electrical equipment could produce shock, endangering life and may burn out equipment. Once your furnace is cleared for use, replace the filter with a new, dry filter.
- Dispose of all food that became wet - do not eat it. Food in glass containers can be kept only if the floodwater did not reach the lid, but the jar must be washed in warm soapy water and rinsed. Discard food not refrigerated for more than six hours and frozen foods thawed for more than four hours. If any dishes came into contact, clean them with a general disinfectant solution such as two tablespoons of liquid bleach to one gallon of warm water, and wash in a dishwasher if possible.
- Discard any medicines and personal products that came into contact with the flood water.