



## **Advice for Residents and Volunteers**

### **Cleaning up after a flood**

It is important to clean and dry your home and everything in it. Floodwater may contain sewage and other hazardous materials which can contaminate your whare/home.

If your gas meter has been affected by water or debris, please contact your gas supplier.

Always work safely when cleaning up after a flood:

- Protect yourself by wearing a properly fitted P2- or N95-rated mask, goggles, gloves, long pants, long-sleeved shirt, and gumboots or work shoes.
- Cover any open cuts, scratches, grazes and wounds with waterproof plasters or dressings.
- Always wash your hands thoroughly after each clean-up session and before handling food.

Wet furniture and surfaces can become mouldy after a couple of days which can make the air in your home unhealthy. Mould may make some people with asthma, allergies, or other breathing problems sick.

- Talk to your doctor or another medical professional if you have questions about cleaning or working in a whare/home that has been flooded.
- If there is a large amount of mould, professional help to clean up the mould may be needed.

Make your whare/home safe and sanitary.

Keep children and animals away from previously flooded areas until they have been cleaned and made safe.

If you have had submerged power supply, ensure you get an electrician to check your electrical supply is safe to use.

Follow advice and instructions from your local council.

Take photos and videos of the damage and anything that needs to be thrown away before starting the clean-up, for insurance purposes.

### **Cleaning up inside**

- Clean up, drain, and dry inside as quickly as possible. Take out everything that is wet and that can be moved – floor coverings, furniture, bedding, clothing, etc., and put them outside to dry when the weather is fine.



# National Emergency Management Agency

## Te Rākau Whakamarumarū

- Check for trapped water and mud in wall cavities, as well as under shower trays, baths, benches and bottom shelves. You may have to chisel out some bricks at the bottom of brick veneer walls.
- Open all doors and windows, and use heaters, (e.g., hot air blowers for under-floor space). Do not use outdoor gas appliances, such as patio heaters, indoors.
- In most cases it is ok to light your fire. Advice for brick fires is to please start a small fire until the steam is gone from the bricks, and then use as normal.
- Consult an engineer if there are signs that the house has moved on its foundations. Signs can include buckled floors, new cracks in walls, or out-of-shape door and window frames.
- Remove skirting, if necessary, and cut out softened plaster board in damaged areas. Consult an expert such as an insurance assessor or builder.
- Replace wall linings and floor coverings only after the building is completely dry.
- Leave redecorating for at least three months after finishing the repairs, to prevent risk of mould, blistering, and peeling.

If you have insurance, contact your insurer to lodge a claim and understand how they can help. They may undertake some of these steps for you as part of your claim.

## In the kitchen

Discard wooden items such as chopping boards and spoons, plastic utensils, and baby bottle teats and dummies, if they have come into contact with floodwater. There is no way to safely clean them.

Clean any other cooking, eating and kitchen utensils that have come into contact with floodwater:

- Wash in hot soapy water.
- Rinse thoroughly in safe water, then disinfect by immersing for 1 minute in a solution of 500 ml (about 2 cups) of plain, unperfumed, household bleach in 10 litres of water.
- Rinse again in safe water.
- Alternatively, boil all utensils for 1 minute and let cool.

## In bedrooms and living rooms

You will need to throw away mattresses and other large items that have been soaked with floodwater. Foam rubber mattresses or pillows may be able to be washed, disinfected and dried in the open air.

Get rid of contaminated clothing, carpets, upholstered furniture, toys and bedding, unless they can be cleaned and disinfected