

Guidelines for Mucking Out & Gutting Houses After a Flood

The Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana

Protocol & Safety Guidelines

- Prior to entering any home after a flooding event ensure the following is off:
 - Electric service
 - Fuel line and gas service
- Never use gasoline powered devices such as generators and pressure washers indoors.
- Age guidelines: No one under the age of 18 should be inside the home being gutted. Youth under the age of 18 could be used for serving food to volunteers, bringing water, and doing landscaping. Gutting is dangerous work. There is fiberglass, sharp tools, power tools, electric issues, mold. It is not uncommon to uncover firearms and other items.
- Attached releases must be signed by homeowners and all volunteers.
- All volunteers must be up-to-date on their tetanus shot (every ten years).
- Mandatory water breaks to be called on the hour.
- No playing of music and rowdy behavior onsite, especially if homeowners are present. This may be a somber occasion for homeowners and if they are present onsite, should be treated as such.
- Volunteers may not keep anything; not even those things designated for the "trash" pile. (The rationale is that homeowners will want somehow to thank us and if we show a desire for something, they will give it whether they really want to or not, telling us "it's trash")
- No pictures that identify the address of the structure.
- No posted pictures on the internet (social media, etc.) of homeowners receiving assistance from us and no information about addresses or names of homeowners on social media.
- We ask that volunteers be sensitive about asking for the story of the family. If everybody on every crew wants kindly to know "what happened", it can be overwhelming and stressful for the homeowner.

Protection Needed

Wear the following when working in a flooded home:

- Eye protection
- Long pants and long sleeves
- Sturdy work shoes with puncture proof shoes (no sneakers and no open toed shoes)
- Heavy work gloves
- Nose and mouth shields
- When mold is present consider the use of Tyvek suits and rubber boots

Steps to Mucking Out & Gutting Flooded Houses

Step 1: Interior Debris Removal

- Debris separation in according with the attached guidelines.
- Remove all flood affected items, separating out those that can be cleaned or restored.

Step 2: Mucking Out (Mud Removal)

Equipment needed: Flat shovels, wheelbarrows, 5 gal. plastic buckets, protective goggles, work gloves, ear plugs, face masks, bleach, industrial type brooms, dust pans, garden hose, mops, power washer, towels, and hand sanitizer.

- First remove mud, muck and silt deposits
- Hose out.

Step 3: Gutting of flooding structures

Equipment needed, may not be fully comprehensive: pry bars, wheelbarrows, 5 gal. plastic buckets, protective goggles, work gloves, dust masks, bleach, claw hammers, screw drivers, industrial type brooms – push and sweep type, sledge hammers, dust pans, heavy- duty outdoor extension cords, if using a generator – gas cans, ladders, work lights, first aid kit, mold kill, scrub brushes, bottled water.

- Walls- remove damaged trim and molding
- Remove damaged sheetrock two feet above the water line. Cutting at a 4 foot level allows for replacement of full sheets.
- Remove damaged wall paneling.
- Remove damaged insulation.
- Remove nails from studs.
- Place all removed material at curb according to attached debris management guidelines.
- Remove damaged floor materials:
 - Carpet and padding
 - Flooring
 - All nails
- Removed electric materials.

Final Step: Cleaning and Sanitizing

- Scrub surfaces as needed.
- Use mold kill as needed. Bleach is not adequate.
- Rinse with clean water.
- Remove any remaining standing water with a shop vac.
- Sweep out gutting debris and bag.