

Recovering After a Flood: Returning Home Safely

Returning home after widespread flooding can feel overwhelming. Use caution and take it one step at a time. Creating a cleanup and recovery plan just like an emergency plan, this will help you organize what needs to be done to restore your home to normal.

Returning Home

- Wait for official clearance: Do not return until authorities confirm it is safe and have cleared your home of structural, electrical, or other hazards.
- Avoid flooded areas: Stay out of any buildings if floodwaters remain around or inside.
- Check for structural damage: Do not enter if you see buckled walls or floors.
- Inspect utilities: Check for damage to electrical or gas equipment caused by floodwater. Find one using Technical Safety BC's find a licensed contractor tool.
- Before digging: Contact BC 1 Call for underground infrastructure information. Website: <https://bc1c.ca> | Phone: 1-800-474-6886
- Drain water slowly: Remove about one-third of the water per day to prevent structural damage.

Managing Mould and Health Risks

Cleaning up after a flood can pose health risks. Mould grows in wet and damp conditions and can damage your home long after the flood.

- Dry quickly: If your home and furnishings are dry within 48 hours, mould growth is less likely.
- Protect vulnerable individuals: Pregnant women, children, elderly, pets, and those with asthma or allergies should avoid areas where mould cleanup is happening.
- Identify and discard mouldy items: Seal items in plastic bags and dispose of them. Wash hands and change clothes after cleanup.
- Seek professional help: If mould persists or moisture sources remain, consult a professional.

Cleaning Tips

- Open doors and windows for airflow (do not use fans if mould is present).
- Scrub washable surfaces with bleach solution (1 part bleach to 10 parts water), soap solution (unscented detergent and warm water), or baking soda solution (¼ tbsp baking soda in warm water).
- Dry surfaces quickly.
- Do not paint or caulk over mouldy drywall—replace it.

Essential Items for Cleaning Mould

- Bucket
- Stiff bristle brush
- Cleaning cloths

- Goggles
- Protective rubber gloves
- Waterproof rubber boots
- Dish detergent
- Household bleach
- N-95 respirators, or ones that provide more protection

Claiming Insurance

- Call your insurance representative before cleanup. Most insurers have 24-hour claims service.
- Document everything: List damaged items, take photos, keep receipts for cleanup and living expenses.
- Contact Insurance Bureau of Canada if unsure of your insurer: 1-844-227-5422

Psychological Care

Recovering from a flood can be stressful. Seek support if needed.

Resources

- Canadian Red Cross - [Flood-Recovery-Guide.pdf](#)
- Island Health - [Floods and Landslides | Island Health](#)
- Fortis BC - [flood-preparedness-fact-sheet.pdf](#)
- Prepared BC - [Recovering after a flood - Province of British Columbia](#)