



What to do after a flood

Water Supply

Wells can be contaminated by floodwater. It is important that you do not drink the water until you can get your well water tested to make sure it is safe to drink. Water sample bottles can be picked up at the health unit offices and other locations in Renfrew County. Visit our website at www.rcdhu.com or call the number at the bottom of the fact sheet for locations. If your well was flooded, you should disinfect it. For more information on how to properly disinfect your well visit: [Fact Sheet: Private Well Disinfection Instructions](#).



Before the Clean-Up: Entering a Dwelling After a Flood

Complete a perimeter check of your property, checking for structural damage. Put your safety first:

- Call your local power company to ensure the hydro is disconnected if your property was flooded and water went above electrical appliances or electrical outlets.
- Wear rubber boots to prevent electrical shock.
- Shut off power to flooded areas at the breaker box.
- Keep extension cords out of the water.
- Do not use flooded appliances or electrical outlets until they have been checked by a certified electrician.
- Do not use furnace or HVAC systems that have been affected by floodwater until inspected by a professional. If you smell unusual odours such as gasoline, natural gas or propane, leave the area immediately and call your local gas company or Fire Department.

The Clean-Up

A home that has experienced extensive water damage or has been flooded with high levels of sewage contamination may require the assistance of a professional to complete a thorough clean up. It is very important to wear protective clothing when entering a previously flooded area, including: rubber boots, rubber gloves, a properly fitted N95 mask or respirator, protective eyewear, etc.

1. Open windows and doors.
2. Remove standing water with pumps.
3. Remove all soaked and dirty materials.
4. Absorbent and porous household items that have been contaminated by sewage, or that have been wet for a long period of time should be discarded (i.e. carpet, upholstered furniture, mattresses etc.).



5. All drywall and insulation affected by floodwater should be removed at least half a meter above the high water line. Treat ceiling tiles and paneling like drywall.
6. Clean hard surfaces affected by floodwater with soap and water, then by rinsing.
7. Disinfection is recommended following cleaning with a dilution of 1 cup of household bleach (5.25%) to 20 litres of water.
8. Set up fans or dehumidifiers to dry area after clean up to prevent mould growth.
9. Wash your hands after cleaning with soap and clean water, or with wipes and alcohol-based hand rub if clean water is not available. Wash the clothing worn for cleanup as well.

Your Private Sewage Disposal System

Flooded properties can mean a malfunctioning sewage disposal system. It is recommended that you wait until floodwaters have receded below the house foundation before attempting to use the septic system. Using a faulty septic system can cause surface ponding or sewage backup in the home. Further information can be obtained by contacting a public health inspector with the Renfrew County and District Health Unit at 613-732-3629, extension 505 or visit www.rcdhu.com.

