



This document is IFAS publication DH 530.

Adapted by UF/IFAS from:
Fact Sheet HE-3174
(Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences,
University of Florida).
Developed by the Florida Cooperative Extension Service for the benefit of Florida's citizens.

Electrical Systems and Appliances – Cleaning and Odor Removal

Electrical Circuits and Equipment

Before you turn on the electrical system, have an electrician or other competent person check it for short circuits. Ask your power supplier for advice and help with electrical systems.

Things to do before the electrician arrives:

- ① Be sure electricity is off both at the meter and in the buildings.
- ② Remove covers from all switches, convenience outlets, light outlets and junction boxes that have been under water.
- ③ If the box is filled with mud, remove the screws holding the receptacle or switch in the box. Pull receptacle, switch and wires in junction boxes out about two inches from box. Clean out all mud and dirt from box and receptacle switch. Do not remove electrical connections. Leave boxes open.
- ④ Remove all fuses and cover from entrance panel. Clean out all mud. Wires can be moved, but do not disconnect.

After above has been done and wiring has a chance to dry, the electrician can check the system without delay. For some equipment such as pumps, a temporary line can be installed by an electrician until the permanent wiring has a chance to dry.

Appliances

Here are some general rules to follow:

- Motorized appliances—Remove the electric motor and take it to an electrical repair shop. The controls (thermostat, pressure switches, wiring, etc.) will have to be cleaned and dried. Insulation should be dried and all dirt removed. Sealed units on refrigerators and freezers should not be harmed by water. Clean up unit and recondition controls.
- Heating appliances—Disconnect and flush with clean water. Float out water with carbon tetrachloride. (Be careful of carbon

tetrachloride fumes—they are dangerous if inhaled. Do the job in open air and do not smoke.) The insulation on hot water heaters will be soaked. Remove all panels and, if possible, the top of the heater. This will give the insulation a chance to dry. Clean and dry thermostat and wiring. Apply rust inhibitor to all metal parts.

- Lamps and Lights—Remove fixtures that were submerged. Clean outlet boxes and wiring. Clean fixture and dry out wiring. Check socket for dirt. Floor or table lamps should be completely disassembled and cleaned. Clean up wiring, sockets and switches. If a switch cannot be opened for cleaning, replace with a new switch. Unless the cord is in good shape, replace it. Check the plug.
- Extension Cords—Any cords not in excellent condition should be thrown away. Fabric covered cords should be replaced. Rubber covered cords in good condition (no cracks in rubber, etc.) can probably be reclaimed. Remove connections from both ends. Peel back the rubber covering until the inside braid is dry. Cut off damaged part of cord. Clean up the plug and receptacle and connect to cord or replace with new ones.
- Grounding—For your protection, all metallic appliances should be grounded when in use to prevent an electrical shock. This applies especially to such appliances as washers, dryers, ranges, waffle irons, etc., and to equipment such as portable drills, saws and grinders. Attach a wire from the frame of the appliance to water pipe or to the ground wire in a grounded wiring system.

