



Home Clean-Up and Renovation — Building Damage



Check walls and foundations for damage. Much can be done to reverse the effects of high water and to restore even heavily water-damaged buildings. Make sure to repair structures as soon as possible. Here are a few key points:

- Check foundations and footings. Start from the bottom when investigating structural features. See that underlying material has not washed out. Filling under the footings should be done with masonry or concrete, never with earth or gravel. Raise or brace up in position to make floors level.
- Wash out the mud, dirt and debris as soon as you can. This should be done before the walls and floors dry out. Start from the top or upper limit of the flooding and work downward, using a hose and mop or washrag.
- Dry out the building and the crawl space under the building. Open doors, windows and foundation vents for good ventilation. If electric power is available, use electric fans to improve circulation. Drying will take considerable time—several days or even weeks, if the weather is damp. Wet wood will decay; dry as soon as possible to reduce decay and mold.
- Insulated frame walls may require special drying. Strips of siding, gypsum board or plaster can be removed from upper and lower portions of the walls to speed up drying of the studding and insulation.
- See that walls are plumb. Check with a level or plumb-bob. Correct and brace walls to keep them vertical.
- Repair and patch where necessary, on a temporary basis. Do final repairs later, in dry weather, when more time is available.
- Concrete floors are easily patched using a rich mix of mortar having no coarse aggregate, one to four mix.
- Wooden floors dry out slowly. Don't build fires to rush drying. Try to prevent buckling and warping by driving more nails wherever flooring tends to lift or bulge. After fully drying, the surface can be planed level or sanded smooth and refinished.

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