

FLOOD RECOVERY: RE-ENTERING YOUR PROPERTY AND CLEAN UP ADVICE

When your property is flooded, it's crucial to act quickly and safely during both the recovery and clean-up processes. This resource outlines the essential steps to take as you navigate the challenges of flood recovery, from initial safety precautions to cleaning and drying your home, ensuring the best outcome for both your health and your insurance claim.

Re-entering your property:

Floodwater can hide many dangers, making it crucial to prioritise your safety when re-entering your home. It's important to be aware of the risks and take the necessary precautions.

- Wait for flooding to subside and return during daylight hours.
- Take a powerful torch, marker, notebook, scissors, large bin bags, and a camera/phone. Wear protective clothing & gloves.
- Do not bring children or pets with you.
- Never touch electricity sources in floodwater, especially if you didn't turn the power off beforehand.
- Turn off the gas supply, and if you suspect a gas supply leak, call the National Gas Emergency Service 24hrs a day on **0800 111 999**.
- Check the safety of your water supply with your water company or local council.
- Have septic tanks or non-mains drainage systems checked by a qualified engineer.
- Beware of rogue traders—always get a written quote and check they're registered with the Buy With Confidence scheme.



Clean up advice:

Cleaning a flooded home involves more than just removing water—it's essential to take steps to protect your health and ensure your insurance claim is valid.



- Wear protective clothing and gloves.
- Mark a line on the wall to show how high the water reached in each room—this will help with your insurance claim and guide the builders on how much work is needed.
- Shovel away mud or silt, then remove floor coverings to allow floorboards to dry. Keep a piece of carpet and underlay for your insurer.
- Only discard belongings that can't be cleaned from flood or sewage water. Clean the rest with disinfectant or in a dishwasher.
- Clean hard surfaces like wood, plastics, and metals with hot soapy water and disinfect.
- Take meter readings for electricity and gas before the recovery begins, as these costs may be claimed back.
- Your insurer should provide skips; if uninsured, the local council may offer them.
- United Utilities will remove sewage water from your home and garden and clean and disinfect affected areas, though this is not a deep clean.

Drying process:

- Ensure good ventilation by opening windows and doors.
- Use fans, industrial heaters, and dehumidifiers—often provided by your insurance company.
- Set your central heating to 20°C or above.
- Your insurance should cover a contractor to check that your property is fully dried out.

Before repairs can begin on a water-damaged property, it must be properly decontaminated and dried. Depending on the flood's severity, removing internal fixtures to expose building materials may be necessary, and the drying process can take time. The British Standards Institution's PAS 64:2013 provides guidance on restoring water-damaged buildings. A contractor handling the clean-up should provide a dry certificate and documentation before repairs can start.