



OKANAGAN  
INDIAN BAND

## Evacuation Area

# Re-entry guide: First steps for returning to your home

---

Information provided from gov.bc.ca emergency  
management page

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-management/preparedbc/know-your-hazards/floods/after-flood>

# Table of Contents

Returning home.....2-3

Rapid Damage Assessments and your home.....4

Managing mould and health risks.....4-5

How to Clean your home.....5-7

Sandbag disposal.....7

Make an insurance claim.....8

Psychological care.....8-10

# Returning home

If you have been forced to leave your home because of the disaster, you will want to go back in, if possible, to retrieve possessions and take stock of damage. Being well prepared and proceeding cautiously will help you stay healthy and avoid injury when you re-enter your home.

## Assemble supplies

- Battery-powered lantern or flashlight (nothing flammable)
- Camera or video camera and notebook to record damage for insurance purposes
- First aid kit (in case of injury)
- Tools (such as crowbar, hammer, saw)
- Drinking water
- Trash bags
- Hard hat and gloves (rubber or heavy gloves)
- Hard-soled boots or shoes
- If your home was flooded, bring large containers to soak bedding and clothing, and lines to hang them on to dry
- Pails, mops and sponges, if your home was flooded
- Liquid chlorine bleach (household laundry bleach containing 5-6% chlorine)

## Before going inside

Walk carefully around the outside of the house. Carefully check for signs of damage or danger.

- Look for loose power lines. Stay away from fallen or damaged electrical wires
- If you smell the “rotten eggs” odour that is the tell-tale sign of gas, call the gas company right away. If the gas meter is outside, turn it off at the main valve. Do not go inside
- Check the foundation, roof, chimney and steps for damage. Look for broken or cracked basement walls. Unnoticed damage could lead to fire or injury from falling debris

- Don't go inside if there is standing water around the house. The water could carry electric current
- Take pictures of the outside damage for insurance claims

## When entering the building

**Use extreme caution.** Move carefully inside the house. Building damage may have occurred where you least expect it. Carefully watch every step you take. Take pictures of the damage inside, both to the house and its contents, for insurance claims.

**Check for gas leaks.** If you smell gas or hear a blowing or hissing noise, open a window and quickly leave the building. Turn off the gas, using the outside main valve if you can, and call the gas company. If you turn off the gas for any reason, it must only be turned back on by a professional.

**Look for electrical system damage.** If you see sparks or broken or frayed wires, or if you smell burning insulation, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker – if you determine that it is safe to do so. If you have to step in water to get to the fuse box or circuit breaker, don't do it – call an electrician or your local electric company for advice.

**Check for sewage and water line damage.** If you suspect sewage lines are damaged inside your property, avoid using the toilets and call a plumber (for damage outside your property, you may need to call the Property Manager). If water pipes are damaged, contact the property manager and avoid using water from the tap.

**Watch for animals.** Small animals that have been flooded or burned out of their homes may seek shelter in yours. Use a pole or stick to turn items over, watching for animals. Use caution when opening drawers and cupboards.

**Disinfect standing water.** If your home was flooded, it is important to disinfect all standing water in the home, including the basement. Measure 2 litres (2 quarts) of liquid chlorine bleach and distribute it evenly over any standing water. Stir the bleach and water together as much as possible. Repeat every four to five days for as long as the water remains.

**Keep track of your expenses and time in cleaning up.** Keep all receipts from cleaning supplies, rental equipment and any cleaning firms you hire. Record the number of hours you and your family or friends spend cleaning up the property

each day. These records will be useful if you are making an insurance claim or applying for disaster financial assistance.

## Rapid Damage Assessments and your home

A rapid damage assessment has been conducted on your home.

Home owners under evacuation order will notice one of these three placards on your door:

- **Green: INSPECTED** - The structure has been inspected for life safety purposes only and no apparent structural or safety hazard was observed that would restrict use or occupancy. A more comprehensive inspection may reveal safety hazards.
- **Yellow: RESTRICTED USE** - This structure has been inspected for life safety purposes only and found to be damaged as described on the placard. Please refer to the placard for information on why entry, occupancy and lawful use are restricted. Homeowners should consult with a licensed electrical and / or gas contractor to ensure that any flood-damaged electrical works and gas appliances are safe to use.
- **Red: UNSAFE** - This structure has been inspected for life safety purposes only and found to be seriously damaged and is unsafe to occupy as described on the placard. Entry may result in death or injury.

**It is the responsibility of the property/building owner(s) to obtain a more detailed report of their building, as the Rapid Damage Assessment process is basic, and there may be hidden damage or subsequent events causing damage which could affect the property/building. Because of this, we recommend you engage the services of a licensed/certified contractor or professional engineer to assist you to review the safety of your premises.**

## Managing mould and health risks

Cleaning up after a flood can pose health risks. You may see or smell mould on clothing, drywall, furniture, cardboard boxes or books, but it may also be hidden under or behind items like carpet, cushions or walls.

Mould grows in wet and damp conditions. It's less likely to grow if your home and furnishings are dry within 48 hours after a flood. This will help prevent mould, which can continue to damage your home long after.

Pregnant women, children, the elderly, pets and those with asthma, allergies or other health problems should not be in or near the area where the mould is being cleaned up.

Identify all mouldy items. Place and seal items in a plastic bag and dispose it. It's important to wash your hands thoroughly after mould cleanup, as well as change your clothes.

If you rent your home, speak to your landlord about any moisture or mould problems. It may be the responsibility of the owner or landlord to address the problem. If you own a condo unit or workspace, be sure to consult with the Condominium Board before taking any action.

Consider seeking professional assistance to identify the right corrective actions to be taken inside your home.

**Tip:** Before you start your cleanup activities, call your insurance representative or company. Most insurers have a 24-hour claims service.

## How to clean your home

Before you begin cleaning, open all interior and exterior doors and windows, allowing air to flow freely through the space. Do not use fans if mould is present, as this can spread the mould to new areas.

Mould that comes back after cleaning is usually an indication that the source of moisture has not been removed. If this happens, always seek professional assistance.

Scrub all washable surfaces with a household bleach solution or unscented soap solution. These areas include window sills, concrete surfaces, hard surfaces and tiles. Dry the surfaces quickly.

Painting or caulking over mouldy surfaces like drywall does not kill mould or stop it from growing back. If the mould is underneath the paint, the drywall will need to be removed and replaced.

## **Essential items for cleaning mould**

- Bucket
- Stiff bristle brush
- Cleaning clothes
- Goggles
- Protective rubber gloves
  
- Waterproof rubber boots
- Dish detergent
- Household bleach
- N-95 respirators, or ones that provide more protection

## **Cleaning solutions**

- A bleach solution is made up of 1-part bleach to 10-parts clean water
- You can make a baking soda solution by adding a ¼ tablespoon of baking soda to a spray bottle of warm water
- A soap solution can be made by combining unscented detergent and warm water

## **What to discard**

Mould cannot be properly cleaned from many porous materials. Instead, dispose of materials that cannot be dried within 48 hours.

Remove and discard flooring that has been soaked by flood water. Remove all wet drywall, going at least 30 cm above the flood water level.

Dispose of all wet items that do not dry quickly, including:

- Insulation and drywall

- Carpets
- Particleboard furniture
- Mattresses and box springs
- Stuffed toys
- Paper and cardboard products
  
- Pillows and cushions
- Furniture coverings
- Perishable foods, foods or medicines packaged in cardboard or plastic

## Sandbag disposal

**Sandbags should be removed in a controlled manner. OKIB will be designating a location for removal.** Residents are responsible for clean up of sandbags on their own properties. Sandbags removed from site can be disposed of at: Whiteman Creek Sandbag Station

**Only empty sandbags are permitted in the bins.**

Across from Parker Cove Residential Development.

Sand from sandbags need to be dumped and empty sandbags placed in the Bin provided





## Make an insurance claim

**Before you start your cleanup activities, call your insurance representative or company.** Most insurers have a 24-hour claims service. Be as detailed as possible when providing information.

List all damaged or destroyed items. If possible, assemble proofs of purchase, photos, receipts and warranties. Take photos of the damage. Keep all receipts related to clean up and living expenses if you've been displaced. Ask your insurance representative about what expenses you may be entitled to and for how long.

If you do not know the name of your insurer or your insurance representative, contact Insurance Bureau of Canada's Consumer Information Centre at 1-844-227-5422.

## Psychological care

Learn how to [stay safe and healthy in an emergency](#).

Fear and anxiety are natural reactions to stressful events and can stir up past traumas. To help yourself and your loved ones:

- Accept offers of help. Seek counselling or spiritual guidance
- Focus on positive memories and the skills you've used to get through other hard times
- Give yourself and your loved one's permission to grieve
- Practice cultural or spiritual customs that bring you comfort

With support, most people recover within a few weeks; however, some will need more time and help to heal. Watch for warning signs of extended anxiety and contact a medical professional or trusted community leader if they last more than two to four weeks:

- Trouble with eating and sleeping
- Feeling depressed or hopeless; showing low energy or crying often
- Being anxious and fearful
- Trouble focusing on daily activities
- Recurring thoughts or nightmares
- Avoiding activities or places that are reminders of the event

## Virtual mental health supports

[Virtual services](#) (such as crisis lines) are available for those experiencing anxiety, depression or other mental health challenges. Or search the [mental health and substance use supports digital hub](#) for more information.

- **310Mental Health Support**  
Call [310-6789](tel:310-6789) for emotional support, information and resources specific to mental health
- **1-800-SUICIDE**  
Call [1-800-784-2433](tel:1-800-784-2433) if you are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including thoughts of suicide
- **KUU-US Crisis Response Service**  
Call [1-800-588-8717](tel:1-800-588-8717) for culturally-aware crisis support for Indigenous peoples in B.C.
- **Alcohol and Drug Information and Referral Service**  
Call [1-800-663-1441](tel:1-800-663-1441) to find resources and support