



Iowa Department of Public Health
Bureau of Environmental Health Services

Frequently Asked Questions About Flooding and Child Care

Overview: Flood waters are likely to contain several different types of hazards such as gasoline, fertilizers, and paints as well as raw sewage and bacteria. After a flood, it is important to clean and disinfect child care environments to protect the health and safety of children in child care.

My carpeting has been covered by flood water. How do I clean it up?

Carpeting that has been soaked with flood water **cannot** be adequately cleaned and disinfected for use in child care. Throw away carpets and pads that are heavily contaminated with flood water, sewage, and other residue. You may be able to save carpet and rugs that have been soaked with cleaner groundwater or rainwater.

I removed my carpeting, how do I clean the subfloor?

Remove any obvious dirt and debris. Scrub the floor with detergent and hot water. Then disinfect the floor by wiping with a bleach and water solution prepared following manufacturers label instructions for disinfecting. Inspect the subfloor for damage. Allow the floor to completely dry before replacing the carpet.

I've had flood water on my solid surface floor (wood, laminate, tile, and concrete). How do I clean and disinfect it?

Remove any obvious dirt and debris. Clean with a mild household detergent and water solution. Allow to dry. Then disinfect the surface by wiping with a bleach and water solution prepared following manufacturers label instructions for disinfecting. Allow to dry completely.

What about flood-damaged drywall and plaster?

These items should be removed and replaced. Remove plaster and drywall to a level at least 4 inches above the flood water line.

There is flooding in the basement. Is it safe to have children upstairs where there is no flooding?

Areas that have not been flooded may still be used for child care. Be sure that flood waters and debris are not tracked into the clean areas of the building during clean-up. Unpleasant odors coming from flooded basements are not a health hazard.