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Post-Flooding Considerations and Mold

The appropriate response to an unplanned “water event” – such as a broken pipe, sewage back-up or severe weather such as a hurricane – can mean the difference between a minor inconvenience and long-lasting damage to a home and its contents. In addition to the time and cost associated with restoring the home, you should also be aware that serious indoor air quality problems might occur as the result of mold. The following information is intended to outline areas for consideration when dealing with post-flooding problems in residential structure and it not inclusive of all situations. Keep in mind this fact sheet is only an overview. Access and read the references and resources listed at the end of this document to become more familiar with the topic and the requirements of practitioners in this

- Fresh, moving air discourages growth and amplification of microorganisms. If power is out, open windows and doors, and air the structure out thoroughly during daylight hours. It is highly recommended that ventilation be maintained during the restoration effort. Dehumidifiers, with hoses that connect to drains, along with wet vacs and fans may also be of help. If using portable fuel-powered generators to power drying equipment, be sure to operate them outside of any structure to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning and possible deaths. Depending on the severity of the problem, do *not* use the HVAC system to dry the area initially; contaminants and mold can spread through the circulation of moist air.
- Use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for dirty water or problems over 48 hours old.

This may include a disposable respirator (N95 is the minimum recommended protection against mold spores), disposable outer protective wear, proper gloves, and eye protection. Always don protective gear before entering a flooded building, and when

field.

First Steps (dependent on severity of the situation)

- Safety is the first priority in any water event.
- Examine the home for structural damage, downed utility lines, and broken water lines before commencing with a plan of work. Priorities will vary depending upon the type of damage and how serious it is.
- Contact utility companies promptly, and shut off water, gas and electricity before commencing work.
- Ventilate the structure

handling water-damaged materials, to avoid dangerous exposures to infectious diseases, molds and bacteria.

Yost, Nathan MD Lsiburek, Joseph Ph.D, Brennan, Terry “What You Need To Know About Mold”.2002 Building Science Corporation.

www.buildingscience.com/resources/mold/default.htm

Don't know where to go for an answer to a specific question?

Contact: Building a Safer Florida, Inc. toll-free 1-866-3221 or www.buildingasafeflorida.com

This document was developed jointly by Building a Safer Florida and the University of Florida's Program for Resource Efficient Communities (www.energy.ufl.edu).