

Post-Disaster Home Cleanup

This playbook outlines the steps necessary for homeowners to safely clean up and repair their homes after experiencing a natural disaster. It ensures safety and efficiency are prioritized during the post-disaster recovery phase.

Step 1: **Assessment**

Conduct a thorough assessment of the damage to your home. Identify potential hazards such as broken glass, exposed nails, or structural weaknesses. Document all damage for insurance purposes.

Step 2: **Safety Gear**

Before starting the cleanup, ensure you have the appropriate safety gear. This includes gloves, sturdy boots, a hard hat, eye protection, and masks suitable for filtering out dust and mold spores.

Step 3: **Services Check**

Check and confirm that all utility services (gas, water, electricity) are turned off before cleanup to avoid accidents such as gas leaks or electrical shocks.

Step 4: **Debris Removal**

Remove debris in a systematic way. Separate items into categories for salvage, recycle, and trash. Be careful of sharp objects and potentially hazardous materials.

Step 5: **Water Extraction**

If flooding occurred, remove standing water using pumps or buckets. Afterward, use fans, dehumidifiers, and open windows to help dry out the interiors.

Step 6: **Disinfection**

Clean and disinfect all surfaces to prevent mold and bacteria growth. Focus especially on porous materials and ensure they are properly dried or disposed of.

Step 7: **Temporary Repairs**

Make temporary repairs to prevent further damage. Cover roof breaches with tarps and board up broken windows to secure your property and deter theft.

Step 8: **Professional Inspection**

Arrange for a professional inspection to assess any structural damages and hidden issues that might not be immediately apparent to the untrained eye.

Step 9: **Restoration Plan**

Develop a plan for the restoration of your home. Prioritize tasks based on safety and necessity. Consider hiring professionals for complex repairs.

Step 10: **Rebuilding**

Begin the rebuilding process, following your restoration plan. Secure necessary permits, hire contractors if needed, and ensure all repairs are up to code.

General Notes

Insurance

Contact your insurance company as soon as possible to report the damage and understand your coverage for disaster-related repairs.

Health Precautions

Be mindful of your health during cleanup. Take regular breaks, stay hydrated, and be aware of symptoms of stress and fatigue.

Community Help

Seek assistance from local community groups, neighbors, and governmental disaster relief programs designed to help with post-disaster recovery.

Financial Aid

Investigate available disaster recovery grants and loans that may help in funding the cleanup and rebuilding efforts.

Documentation

Keep thorough records of all cleanup and repair efforts, including receipts, for insurance claims and potential tax deductions for losses not covered by insurance.