



26 July 2013

Tips on Garden clean up after flooding

General

Any sewage or chemicals in floodwater will have been very diluted and present a low risk, but you should always:

- Wear protective clothing – waterproof boots, apron and gloves – while cleaning up. Cover any open cuts with waterproof plasters.
- Wash your hands with soap and water after being in contact with floodwater or items that have been contaminated and always wash your hands before eating or preparing food.
- Thoroughly clean all hard surfaces (e.g. children's play equipment, garden furniture, etc) with a solution made up with hot water and an ordinary detergent-based household cleaning agent
- We recommend you wash all other soft fabric items (e.g. soft furnishings, children's toys etc) on a hot soapy wash – 60°C (or recommended temperature on detergent manufacturer's instructions). Items that cannot be put in a washing machine should be dry cleaned

Possible chemical contamination

- Remove and discard items that are clearly contaminated or that you suspect may have been contaminated. If items are likely to be the subject of insurance claims, speak to insurers and find out what evidence claims will require. In the interim, we recommend that affected items are moved and stored in areas away from those which are used for day-to-day living. Contaminated items should be discarded at the earliest opportunity.
- Special care should be taken when opening cupboards that may contain household or garden chemicals that have become wet, especially those in bags or cardboard packaging. In general avoid contact with these products if wet and wear protective clothing and waterproof gloves whilst cleaning up. DO NOT try to utilise any products which are flood damaged. Concerns regarding the disposal of specific chemicals should be directed to the local authority environmental health team
- Chemical pollution may have occurred due to materials stored in garages and garden sheds. Special care should be taken during any clean up. For example car batteries in flooded premises should only be handled with rubber gloves for electrical and chemical safety reasons because acid from the batteries could have leaked out
- Remove and discard items which are damaged and beyond repair



Play areas

- Do not let children or pets play on affected grassed or paved areas until they have been cleaned.
- Remove any waste e.g. litter, rubbish etc. carried in by the flood from affected areas. After the grass has grown and been cut once, there should be no further risk.
- Sunlight and soil will help destroy harmful bacteria and outdoor areas will be safe to use within a week or so after flooding.

Advice from the Food standards Agency

General

- Don't eat any food that has been touched or covered by floodwater or sewage.
- Always wash your hands before preparing food.

For fresh fruit and vegetables that are grown either for sale or for your own consumption in your garden or allotment:

- You should throw away any produce covered by flood water if it is ready to eat, and is grown above ground, such as lettuce or strawberries. It is fine to eat produce that is growing above the water and not contaminated with flood water e.g. fruit on trees.
- It is OK to eat produce that has been cooked, even if it has been contaminated by flood water this is because cooking will kill any harmful germs that might be present.
- You should wait at least six months after the area was flooded, before harvesting any new fruit or vegetables from that affected land. This is to make sure that any harmful germs that might be in the soil from the flood water will not survive and contaminate the produce. You do not need to wait before planting new crops if the fruit or vegetables will be cooked before being eaten.

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