

DRYING YOUR MATERIALS:

It's important to start drying or to freeze your items within 48 hours or mold may begin to develop. Be gentle with your items, especially the soaked items as they are weak and may fall apart. You don't need to clean and dry everything all at once. Prioritize. Buy time and put things in your freezer.

Items that are damp should be air-dried. Place them in a cool, dry space equipped with fans. Items that have been completely soaked and cannot be air-dried within 48 hours, should be freeze-dried. (A home frost free freezer works just fine.) Wrap them in freezer or waxed paper, and store them in a freezer. Freezing stalls the growth of mold and, most importantly, buys time. Please note: Consult professional experts before you unfreeze your items.

If items are wet, rinse with clear, clean water or a fine hose spray. Clean off dry silt and debris from your belongings with soft brushes or dab with damp cloths. Try not to grind debris into objects; overly energetic cleaning will cause scratching. Dry with a clean, soft cloth. Use plastic or rubber gloves for your own protection.

Air dry objects indoors if possible. Sunlight and heat may dry certain materials too quickly, causing splits, warpage, and buckling. If possible, remove contents from wet objects and furniture prior to drying. Storing damp items in sealed plastic bags will cause mold to develop. If objects are to be transported in plastic bags, keep bags open and air circulating.

The best way to inhibit the growth of mold and mildew is to reduce humidity. Increase air flow with fans, open windows, air conditioners, and dehumidifiers. Moderate light exposure (open shades, leave basement lights on) can also reduce mold and mildew.

If objects are broken or begin to fall apart, place all broken pieces, bits of veneer, and detached parts in clearly labeled, open containers. Do not attempt to repair objects until completely dry or, in the case of important materials, until you have consulted with a professional conservator.

Buildings: Remove water-soaked insulation from the attic and, if possible, from behind walls. Allow plaster to dry gradually, because forced drying may cause further damage.

Framed artwork: Remove frames from paintings (but not the stretcher) in a clean, dry place. Keep wet paintings horizontal and paint-side up. Air dry, face up, away from direct sunlight. For art on paper or photographs: If image appears stuck to glass, leave in frame and dry glass-side down.

Photographs: Rinse mud off photos (using gentle water stream or by immersion and gentle agitation). Thoroughly wet photos can stay wet in a container of clean water. Dry or freeze within 48 hours. Freeze or air dry damp or partially wet photographs.

Wet or partly wet books: Pack these snugly, spine down, and freeze.

Damp books: Air dry--stand upright on paper towels about every 50 pages. Replace paper toweling frequently.

CD/DVD: If the disc has a heavy accumulation of dirt, rinse it with water. You can use commercially available water-based detergent formulated for cleaning or isopropyl alcohol or methanol, for additional cleaning. If disc is already dry, try an air puffer or use a soft cotton cloth or chamois to wipe the disc. **Do not** wipe in a direction going around the disc. Wipe from the center of the disc straight toward the outer edge. Avoid using paper products, including lens paper, to wipe the disc.

Clothing/textiles: Air dry if at all possible. Shaped objects, such as garments or baskets, should be supported by gently padding with toweling or uninked, uncoated paper. Renew padding when it becomes saturated with water. If don't have time to air dry, bag wet textiles in plastic and freeze. Dry clean or launder textiles and carpets as you normally would.

Furniture (wood): Dab dry with clean cloths. If mud-covered, rinse immediately with clean water. Furniture finishes and painting surfaces may develop a white haze or bloom from contact with water and humidity. These problems do not require immediate attention; consult a professional conservator for treatment.

Furniture (upholstered): Try to dry a bit more slowly than plain wood furniture.

Baskets: Pad basketry with uninked newsprint; keep lids on; dry slowly.

Wood, ceramics, metal: Rinse in a mild solution of water and gentle, non-detergent cleaner. Air dry. Allow heavy mud deposits on large metal objects, such as sculpture, to dry. Caked mud can be removed later. Consult a professional conservator for further treatment.

Please note that exposure to molds can have serious health consequences such as respiratory problems, skin and eye irritation, and infections. The use of protective gear, including a respirator with a particulate filter, disposable plastic gloves, goggles or protective eye wear, and coveralls or a lab coat, is therefore essential.

For more detail consult The Flood Recovery Booklet at http://www.neilsa.org/flood_recovery/flood_cover.html