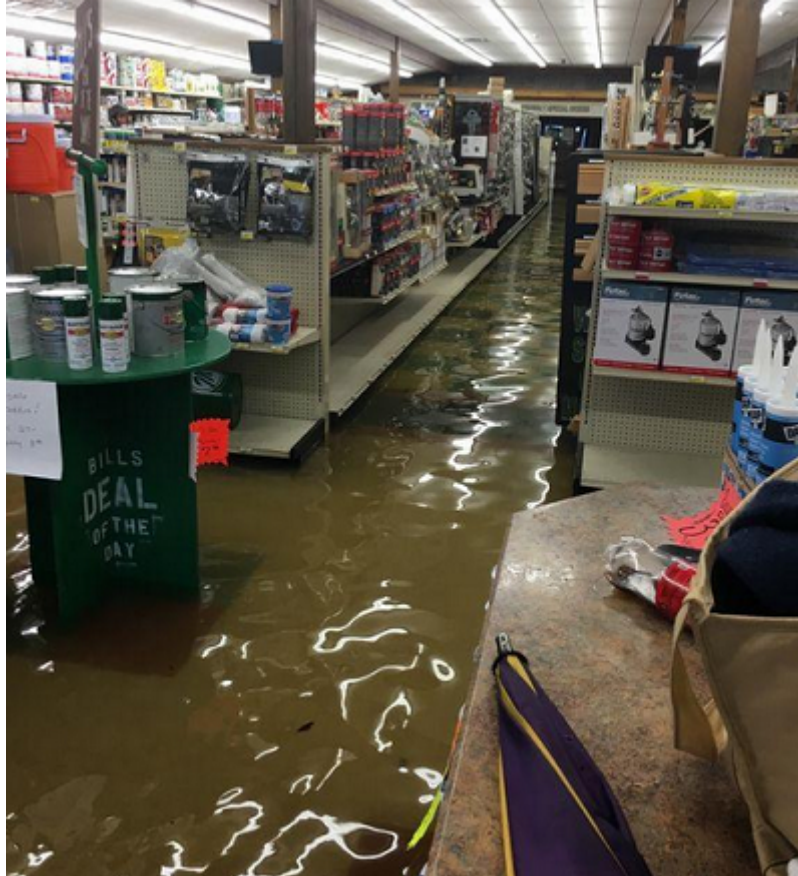


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The road to recovery - what to do after a flood



After a devastating event such as the historic flood that affected much of south Louisiana this past summer, many people have been left wondering what to do next. When do you start rebuilding your home? There are many steps to take before flood survivors can begin to rebuild their homes and return to a life of normalcy.

According to Marchand's Interior & Hardware manager, Brentley Marchand, residents must remove all wet items such as carpeting, drapes, furniture, sheetrock and flooring immediately in order to prevent mold infestations in your home.

One highly recommended product line to disinfect and kill mold is Wechem, a chemical engineering firm based out of Harahan.

"They developed the products, post Hurricane Katrina, to create a mold killing disinfectant for Entergy of New Orleans," Marchand said. "We stock the product in ready to use, single strength, and double strength."

Marchand also recommends air movers, fans and dehumidifiers to quicken the process of drying out your home. Once you believe it is dry, you should use a moisture meter to see to verify. The reader should read 15 percent or less in order to begin adding new sheetrock.

"Before you sheetrock, we suggest you apply Boric Acid (\$2.99 16oz) inside your walls. Boric Acid is very effective form of killing Roaches and Ants. Your walls being open provide the perfect time to treat your home," he added.

LSU AgCenter housing specialist Claudette Reichel offers the following tips concerning flooring:

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- Engineered wood and laminate flooring that swells or delaminates from flooding should be replaced.
- Solid vinyl and ceramic tile or stone flooring on a concrete slab may be cleaned in place. Sheet vinyl with paper backing is at risk of holding moisture and may support mold growth, so it may need to be replaced if discoloration or loosening occurs.
- If there is wood sub-flooring, it may swell and buckle or delaminate. If so, removal of flooring may be needed to hasten drying and replace damaged sub-flooring.
- Clean and dry wood sub-flooring before replacing floor covering.
- After cleaning, using a dehumidifier will greatly speed the drying process to avoid mold growth and allow faster restoration.

"To all of our customers, we are offering for one of our professionals to come meet you at the job site and help you along," Marchand added. "No charge [for customers who have purchased flooring from Marchand's], just give us a call, and we will be there.

Marchand's is looking forward to being part of putting the community back together, whatever it takes."

Here are some examples of "flood smart" building techniques from FEMA:

- Elevate and secure water heaters, furnaces and other appliances (such as washers and dryers) on pressure-treated wood or masonry so that they sit at least 12 inches above the floor level.
- Install back flow preventers and check valves to plumbing to ensure that waste water and sewage flow out of your house only. Floor drains and standpipes can also prevent flood or waste water from collecting in your home.
- Install a sump pump in your home. Be sure to get one that has a battery or water-powered backup system in case the power goes out.
- Install all electrical panel boxes, circuit breakers, wall switches, and outlets at least one foot above the base flood elevation for your area.
- Anchor any indoor or outdoor fuel tanks with non-corrosive metal bindings to prevent them from being swept away by flood waters
- Close up any cracks in the ceiling or foundation of your home with a waterproof sealant. Flood waters can flow through even the smallest cracks and will quickly turn cracks into gaping holes.
- Install wire mesh guards over your gutters to prevent debris from clogging them and creating pockets of standing water on your roof.
- Be sure to obtain any necessary permits and follow all local building codes when rebuilding or making repairs. Contact your local code officials BEFORE beginning any construction to ensure that you will be meeting all floodplain management requirements.

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Flooring Updates

By Betty

Flooring Network

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