

# New USU Extension Website Offers Flood Preparation and Recovery Resources

Kathleen Riggs

04/21/2023

```
$(document).ready(function(){ $(''.pdf-wrapper').hide();  
$(''.pageTitle').addClass('text-bold'); });
```



Due to the record snowfall this year, many areas of the state have experienced flooding, and other parts are bracing for it. To assist homeowners, businesses, and others, Utah State University Extension created a website with flood information and resources at [flood.usu.edu](http://flood.usu.edu). The site includes information and tips on how to prepare for flooding, what to do during a flood, and recovery after a flood. Also included are flood maps for the state, information on sandbagging, flood insurance, emergency preparation, food safety, sanitizing, and more.

One article on the website includes information on safely cleaning your home after a flood.

USU Extension Family and Consumer Sciences Professor Kathy Riggs stresses the importance of properly cleaning and sanitizing wet and muddy household furnishings, carpets, clothing, and surfaces as quickly as possible after a flood to avoid damage and contamination.

She shares these tips from the American Cleaning Institute for cleaning up after a flood.

- \* Call your insurance carrier within 24 hours if possible.

- \* Document the damage with photos before the cleanup process. Even if all items are not covered

under your policy, it is best to have complete photo documentation.

- \* Consider calling a disaster recovery expert. Floodwater may carry silt, raw sewage, oil, or chemical wastes that can cause bacterial, viral, and parasitic diseases. Proper cleanup methods are critical and require disinfecting, not just cleaning.

- \* Consider all water unsafe for drinking, cooking, and cleaning until you have checked with your local health department.

- \* Check with local authorities to determine how to dispose of household items contaminated by sewage or left wet for an extended time. Some locations have regulations and specific procedures for bagging, tagging, and disposing of contaminated items.

- \* When cleaning, wear protective clothing, including long-sleeved shirts, long pants, rubber or plastic gloves, and waterproof boots or shoes.

- \* Take anything that has been wet for two or more days outside. Even though you may not see it, these items could have mold growing.

- \* Throw away items that absorb water and cannot be cleaned or disinfected such as mattresses, carpeting, and stuffed animals.

- \* Remove and discard any items made of cloth if you cannot wash them in hot water.

- \* Clean floors, stoves, sinks, dishes, and countertops with bleach. Do not use more than one cup of bleach per gallon of water, and never mix bleach with ammonia or other cleaners.

- \* Launder your flood-soiled fabrics when the water is clean and safe, electricity is restored, and the washing machine has been checked for damage.

- \* Throw away fresh foods and commercial or home-canned foods in glass jars that may have come in contact with flood water. Cans of food may rust and weaken sealed seams, contaminating the contents. Cardboard and plastic containers are also easily contaminated and should be discarded.

- \* All countertops, appliances, floors, shelves, pots, pans, etc., should be washed with warm or hot soapy water followed by disinfecting. To disinfect, use a solution of  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of water.

Keep surfaces wet for two minutes, then rinse with clean water. Discard wood and plastic items such as cutting boards, utensils, and food storage containers that have been in contact with contaminated water, as they may harbor bacteria.

\* Clean clothes and other water-soaked fabrics. Wet textiles are the perfect breeding ground for mold and mildew. Although your first instinct may be to wash these items in hot water, high temperatures may set stains. [Click here](#) for instructions on how to pre-wash, pre-treat, and wash fabrics.

“Experiencing damage to personal property by flooding can be devastating,” Riggs said. “But knowing there are steps to salvage and sanitize items that have been exposed to mud and debris can at least give you some peace of mind.”

## Contact

**Kathleen Riggs**

[kathleen.riggs@usu.edu](mailto:kathleen.riggs@usu.edu)

435-586-8132

## More Extension Updates

- [Extension News](#)
- [Gardening](#)
- [Recipes](#)
- [Personal Finance](#)
- [Relationships](#)
- [Our Impact](#)

[Tips Sign Up](#)[Take a Course](#)[Donate to Extension](#)