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CC 20 Revised 1979 Emergency Flood Information...Care of Floors, Walls and Doors.

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Smooth-Surface Floor Coverings

Water coming into the house through the doors and windows may cause less damage to the floors than water coming up from below. The floor covering will protect the floor to some extent if the water does not remain on it for too many days. Long submersion, on the other hand, will loosen adhesives. Wooden floors will warp after too long an exposure to water. This will cause tiles to loosen and sheet linoleum to bulge.

Rubber and asphalt tiles and inlaid linoleums which are glued to the floor may buckle. If water remains between the floor and the floor covering, it may be necessary to slash the linoleum in the places where it has buckled, or to remove the loose pieces of tile, until the water has evaporated. Then the covering may be re-glued in place.

Sheet linoleum presents the biggest problem, because the water may seep under a large section. In this case it may be necessary to remove the entire sheet. If carefully removed, the sheet may often be re-cemented after the floor has thoroughly dried. This may take as much as six weeks. An entire new sheet of lining felt would be needed.

If linoleum is broken, brittle, and cannot be salvaged, remove it with a chisel or hoe. Let the floor dry thoroughly before laying any type of floor covering.

Silica gels, obtainable from stores which handle supplies from chemical companies, are excellent materials to use to absorb excess moisture from rooms, storage closets, chests of drawers and trunks.

Ventilation and heat will help dry the house which has endured floods.

Doors

Remove the knobs from the doors and lay the doors on a level surface with wooden strips separating them, to speed drying and to prevent warping and twisting out of shape. With veneered doors this is especially important. Veneered doors are very likely to be ruined by submersion, but some of them may be usable if they are piled properly and dried carefully to prevent separation of the piles.

Locks, especially those made of iron, should be taken apart, wiped with kerosene, and oiled. If it is not feasible to remove them, squirt in a little machine oil through the bolt opening or the keyhole, and work the knobs to distribute the oil. Otherwise the springs and metal casing will soon rust and need replacing. Do not use too much oil or it will drip onto the woodwork and make later painting difficult.

Walls

Do not attempt to wash damp plaster; it should not be rubbed or cleaned until it is bone dry. Then it may be rubbed uniformly and lightly with sponge rubber, or a good wallpaper cleaner. With care, plaster may be wiped with a slightly damp cloth and dried immediately. Leave badly stained walls for treatment when final redecoration is to be done. Wash washable wallpaper the same as a painted wall. Work quickly so paper does not become soaked.
Wallpaper

Wallpaper hanging from walls and ceilings is difficult to replace because it is brittle and is likely to be badly stained. Ordinarily, tear it off and redecorate when convenient. Small sections of wallpaper may be stuck in place.

Repaste edges or sections loosened. Use a commercially prepared paste or make your own as follows: Mix 2 pounds (.9 kg) wheat flour and 1 quart (.95 l) cold water to a smooth paste; stir in 2 quarts (1.9 l) of boiling water and continue boiling until paste is semi-transparent; add 1 ounce (30 ml) of alum that has been dissolved in 1/2 cup (.12 l) of hot water.

Painted Walls

Use water with mild soap or a commercial cleaner. Wash a small area at one time, working from the floor up; rinse with clean water immediately. Wash the next part, overlapping the first part until the wall is finished. Ceilings should be done last. Badly stained walls need redecorating.

Contact your county extension agent for further information.

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