1979

CC21 Revised 1979 Emergency Flood Information...Salvaging Damaged Clothing

Thelma Thompson

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Emergency

Flood Information

By Thelma Thompson
Extension Clothing Specialist

Since disease-producing bacteria often carried by floodwaters can remain alive for long periods in and on fabrics, special care of flood-damaged clothing is essential.

For washable items, brush off all loose dirt. If garments are stained, rinse in cool water until as much mud as possible is removed. Repeat if necessary. (Hot water sets rust-like stains from red or yellow clay). Wash as usual, but be sure to use enough detergent to keep soil from redepositing on fabrics. Repeat washing if necessary.

If liquid chlorine bleach can safely be used on the fabric, you may use it as a disinfectant in the wash cycle. Follow instructions on container.

You may choose other disinfectants such as Quaternary compounds, Pine oil, Phenotic, if chlorine bleach is harmful to fabric or colors. (Again follow directions on container).

Bleach if stains remain. Sodium perborate is the safest bleach on most fabrics, but not as effective as chlorine bleach. Chlorine bleaches are strong and can cause fabric damage. Chlorine bleaches should not be used on silk, wool, spandex or some resin treated fabrics—durable press, for example.

If garments are to be sent to the dry cleaner and are partially dry, completely dry them at room temperature. Brush to remove excess mud before sending clothing to the dry cleaner. Give the dry cleaner full information on cause of damage, and if possible indicate the fabric’s fiber content. The professional dry cleaner has skills and techniques that can do wonders in restoring clothes.

Leather shoes and other leather articles

Remove mud before it dries on shoes. Wash off remaining mud and grit with cold water. Dry slowly at room temperature. Stuff absorbent paper toweling into shoes to help retain shape.

Oil or grease rough or work shoes with warm Neats Foot Oil (a dressing for leather), cod or castor oil, tallow or wool grease. Rub well. Use leather paste wax or polish to refinish shoes if this is not done commercially.

Contact your county extension agent for further information.