

Don't Wait, Take Photos and Start Cleaning Now

Release Date: October 13, 2017

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The government of Puerto Rico and the Federal Emergency Management Agency offer the following tips to homeowners and renters while cleaning their homes.

Before cleaning, survivors should:

- **Take photos of damage before you begin the clean-up process.** Be sure to include photos or videos of the outside and inside of the building, including damaged personal property, and label them by room before you remove anything. If you have insurance, be sure to photograph the make, model and serial number for appliances such as washers, dryers, hot water heaters, kitchen appliances, TVs and computers.
- **Save all repair receipts.**
- **If you have insurance, separate damaged items from undamaged items.** The insurance adjuster will need to document damaged items when conducting an inspection. If possible, keep samples of carpet, flooring, wallpaper, drapes, etc.
- **Throw away flood-damaged items that pose a health risk.** After taking photos, immediately throw away flood-damaged items that pose a health risk after coming into contact with flood waters, such as perishable food, clothing, cushions and pillows.

When salvaging and cleaning up hurricane damaged property:

- **Always wear protective clothing.** This includes long-sleeved shirts, long pants, rubber or plastic gloves and waterproof boots or shoes.
- **Take wet items outside.** Your home could be contaminated with mold, which may raise the health risk for those with asthma, allergies and breathing conditions. For detailed tips on cleaning mold safely, visit the Center for Disease Control's site at <https://www.cdc.gov/mold/cleanup.htm>.



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Page 1 of 3

- **Clean all hard surfaces and items with bleach.** If possible, wash wet fabrics in hot water.
- **Use caution when entering your home.** Before entering your residence, look around the outside for damaged power lines, gas lines and other structural damage. If able, open doors and windows so your house can air out before spending any length of time inside.
- **Watch for sharp objects such as protruding nails and screws, aluminum, and broken glass.**
- **Turn off main electrical power and water systems.** Don't use gas appliances until a professional can inspect them.
- **Check all ceilings and floors for signs of sagging or other potentially dangerous structural damage.** Remove all drywall and insulation that has been in contact with flood waters.
- **Throw out any items that cannot be cleaned.** This includes items like mattresses, carpeting, stuffed animals that absorb water and cannot be cleaned or disinfected.

If you have insurance, report your damage from the hurricane to your insurance company as soon as possible.

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FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.

*Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, call FEMA toll-free at **800-621-3362** (voice, **711/VRS** - Video Relay Service). (TTY: **800-462-7585**). Multilingual operators are available (press 2 for Spanish).*

The SBA is the federal government's primary source of money for the long-term rebuilding of disaster-damaged property. SBA helps businesses of all sizes, private non-profit organizations, homeowners and renters, which can cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged real estate and personal property.



FEMA

Page 2 of 3

These disaster loans cover losses not fully compensated by insurance or other recoveries and do not duplicate benefits of other agencies or organizations.

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