Cleaning Up and Drying Out Your Home

If your house or its understructure have been under water from the recent flooding you will need to take important steps clean out bacteria and dry the building out thoroughly.

It is important to ***disinfect all surfaces*** that were wet from floodwaters. Mold and mildew can develop from bacteria carried in floodwaters and infest your home. This may cause illness to those dwelling in the house long after structure has been repaired.

Steps to take for drying out the house:

Turn off the main power.

Open up the house to allow moist air to escape.

Remove all wet furniture, contents and carpets or rugs. If you decide to keep some of these items they must be cleaned and disinfected.

Discard all contaminated food products.

Interior Walls:

- Interior plaster walls will need to be drained if they are still holding water. Remove the baseboard trim and drill holes about 2" above the floor to let the water out. The holes can be hidden behind the reinstalled baseboards.
- Flood soaked sections of wallboard will usually have to be removed and thrown away.
- Paneled walls can usually be dried out by prying out the bottom corner of the paneling and propping it out away from the wall studs.

Exterior Walls:

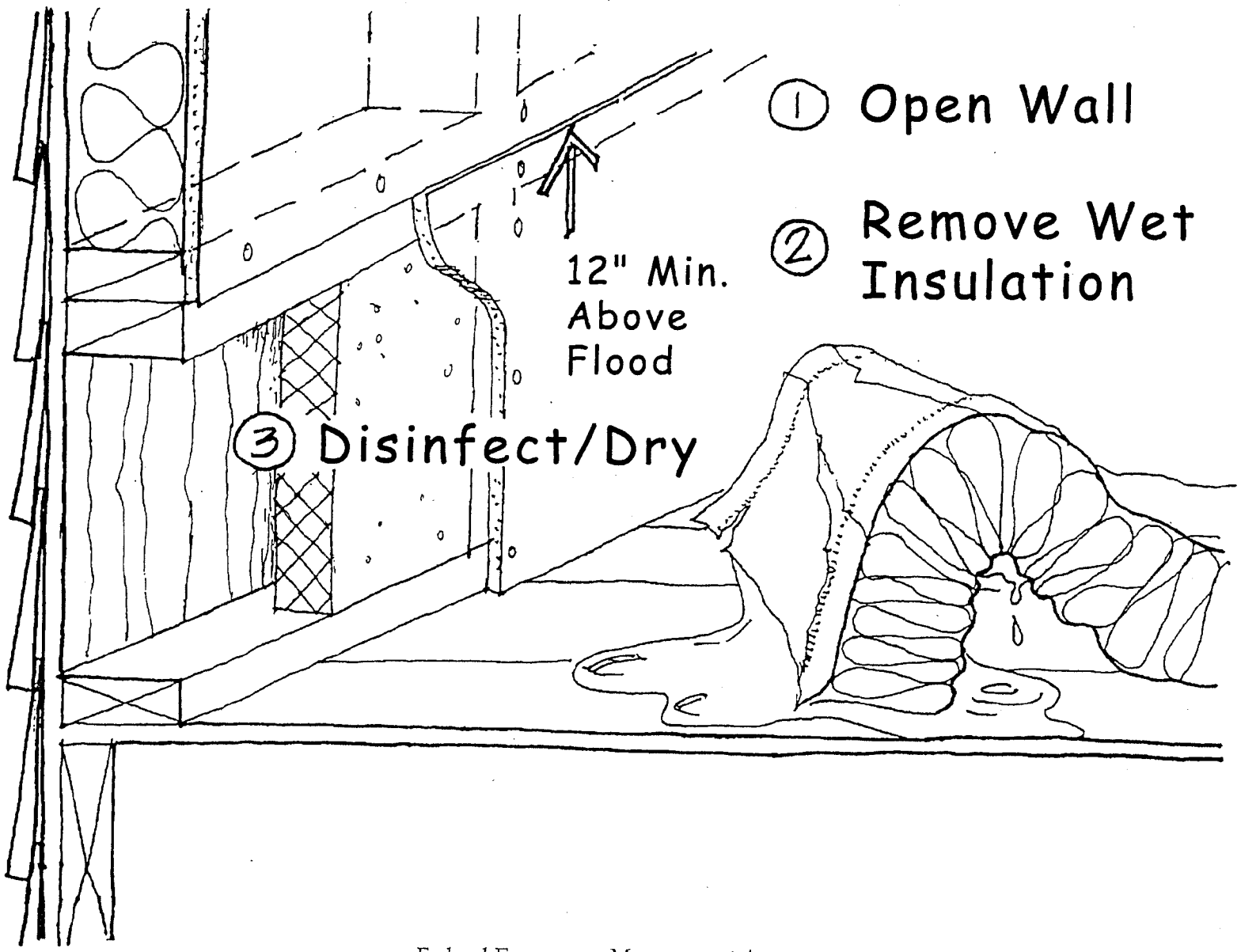
- Insulation in exterior walls will hold moisture and bacteria. It is important to remove any flood soaked insulation as soon as possible so the other building materials can dry out properly.
- Batt insulation and blown-in insulation cannot be reused in your repairs and must by thrown away.
- Rigid foam insulation can be removed and disinfected. Once it is completely dry it can be reinstalled in the wall cavity.
- Once the insulation is removed the wall must be disinfected and thoroughly dried. Dehumidifiers and portable heaters can speed this process up.

Floor Framing:

- If the floodwaters got into your floor framing but not into your house you will need to check for wet floor insulation. Wet floor insulation must be removed and the framing disinfected and dried out in the same manner as the walls.

Disinfecting:

- Disinfect all surfaces that were soaked by floodwaters with "disinfecting" or "sanitizing" products.
- An alternative is to use a mixture of ¼ cup liquid chlorine bleach mixed into one gallon of water.
- Remove mildew using household mildew removers or mildewcides.



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