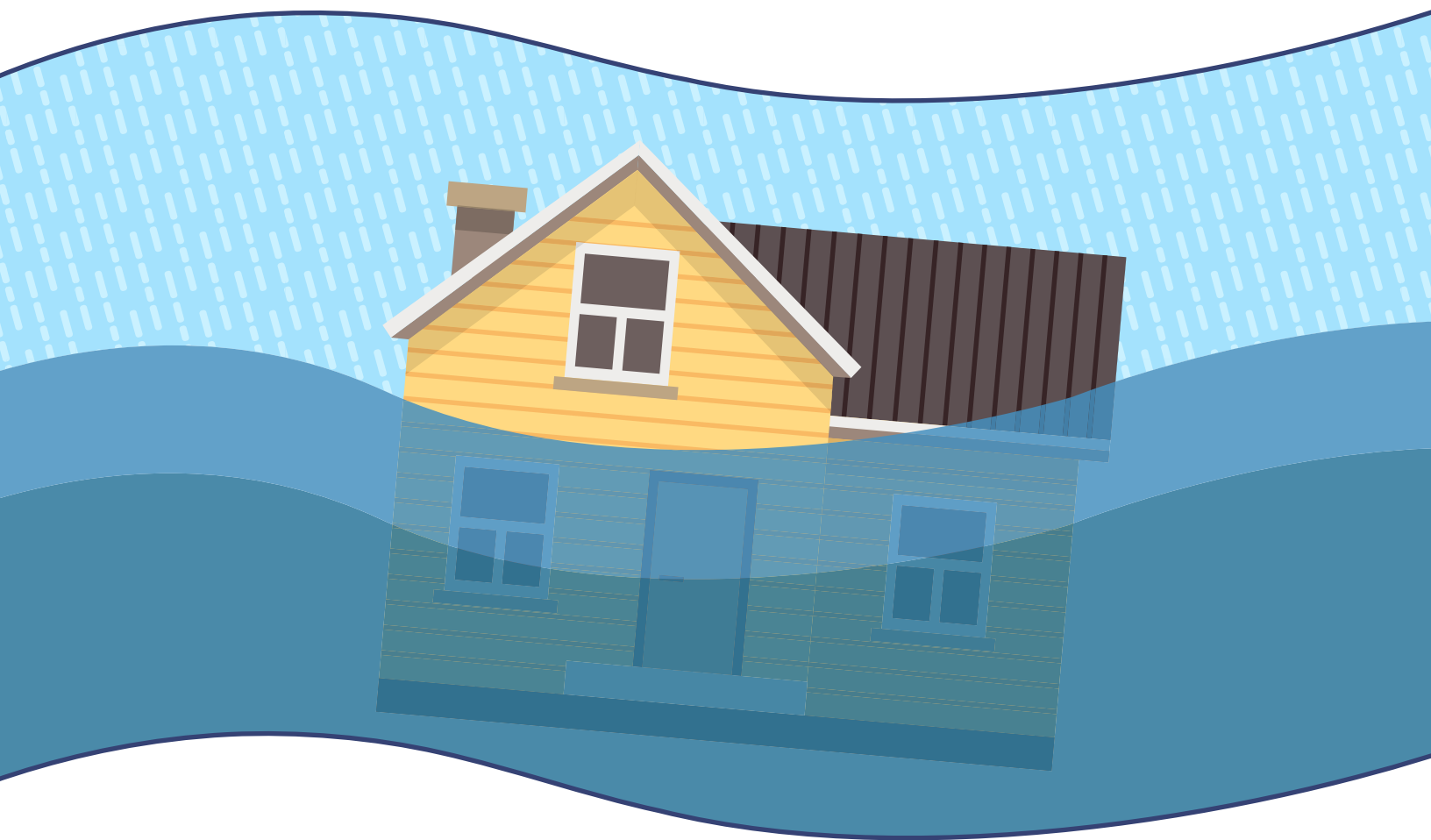


Re-Entering a Flooded Home

For Homeowners and Inspectors

Because natural disasters are sometimes unpredictable and unavoidable, it is important for homeowners to take necessary precautions to reduce the damage to their homes. However, when returning to a home that's been flooded after a natural disaster, such as a hurricane, tornado or flood, homeowners should be aware that their house may be contaminated with mold or sewage, which can cause health problems. The following steps should be considered when re-entering a home after a natural disaster.



**INTERNATIONAL
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When You First Re-Enter Your Home

If there is standing water in your home and you can turn off the main power from a dry location, then go ahead and turn off the power, even if it delays cleaning. If you must enter standing water to access the main power switch, then call an electrician to turn it off instead. Never turn the power on or off yourself, or use an electric tool or appliance while standing in water.

Additionally:

- Have an electrician check the house's electrical system before turning the power on again.
- If the house has been closed up for several days, enter briefly to open the doors and windows to let the house air out for a while (at least 30 minutes) before you remain for any length of time.
- If your home has been flooded and has been closed up for several days, assume that your home has become contaminated with mold.
- If your home has been flooded, it also may be contaminated with sewage.

Drying Out Your House

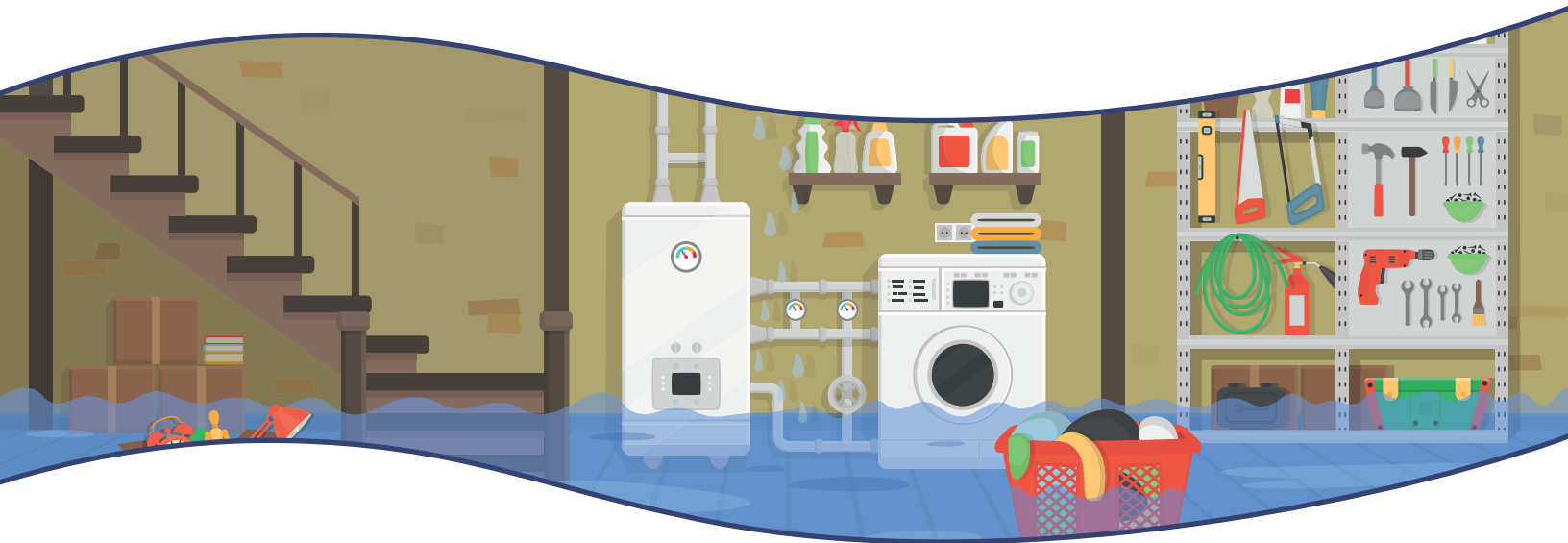
If flood water or stormwater has entered the home, dry it out as soon as possible. To do so, the following steps should be taken:

- If you have power and an electrician has determined that it's safe to turn it on, use a wet-dry shop vacuum (or the vacuum function of a carpet steam cleaner), an electric-powered water-transfer pump, or a sump pump to remove the standing water. When operating the equipment in wet areas, be sure to wear rubber boots.
- If you do not have electricity, or it is not safe to turn it on, you can use a portable generator to power the equipment to remove standing water. Note: If you must use a gasoline-powered pump, generator, pressure washer, or any other gasoline-powered tools to clean your home, never operate the gasoline engine inside the home, basement, garage, carport, porch, or other enclosed or partially enclosed structure, even if the windows and doors are open. Such improper use can create dangerously high levels of carbon monoxide and cause carbon monoxide poisoning.
- If weather permits, open the doors and windows to aid in the drying-out process. Use fans and dehumidifiers to remove excess moisture. Fans should be placed by a window or door to blow the air outward rather than inward so as not to spread mold spores indoors.



Drying Out Your House (continued)

- Have your home's heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) system checked and cleaned by a maintenance or service professional who is experienced in mold cleanup before you turn it on. If the HVAC system was flooded with water, turning on the mold-contaminated HVAC will spread mold spores throughout the house. Professional cleaning will kill the mold and prevent mold growth later. When the service professional determines that your system is clean, and if it is safe to do so, you can turn it on and use it to help remove excess moisture from your home.
- Prevent water outdoors from re-entering your home. For example, rainwater from gutters or the roof should drain away from the house; the ground around the house should slope away from the house to keep the basement and crawlspace dry.
- Ensure that the crawlspace has proper drainage to limit water seepage. Ventilate it to allow the area to dry out.



In summary,

Preparing your home prior to a natural disaster - when it is practical to do so - can help reduce damage to the home, as well as your own stress. Natural disasters, however, are often unpredictable and unavoidable. Re-entering the home, as well as drying it out, can be dangerous and should be conducted with caution. By following these steps, homeowners can better understand how to safely enter, air out, drain, and return to living in their home. And be sure to have your InterNACHI® Certified Professional Inspector® inspect your home after a major storm or flood to assess the damage and make appropriate recommendations.

