

# The CHRONICLES Newsletter

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Please email all articles, letters to the editor, subscription inquiries etc. to [thechronicles@shaw.ca](mailto:thechronicles@shaw.ca)



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## THIS WEEKS FEATURES

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### 1. OH, THE EAGLE EYES OF A TRAINED INVESTIGATOR

Ron Wilkes, Integral Property Loss Consultants

The eagle eyes of a trained investigator are at it again. All you claims managers, claims examiners, claims supervisors, and adjusters take heed, if you want a good investigator not only for fire, forensic, and special investigations, but automobile accident reconstruction as well, call today **780 – 910 - 4424**, do not hesitate because he who hesitates loses. OK, OK, I'll stop ranting now. Robert writes:

*“By the way, I note a typo in the heading of the Chronicles. Where it says “subscription enquires”.....that should be changed to “subscription inquiries”. Take care. Robert”*

**Editors Note:** Could someone please take this poor man out of the stone age and into the information age. By the time the general population reads this I will have sent you the March editions including this one for proofing. How did we make out?

**PS:** You can critique me all you want because I sure need it just ask “Short Pants”.

*“So Ron, just WHO, is “Short Pants”? (R.A.E.)*

## **2. SPRING IS HERE AGAIN AND SO ARE THE FLOODS**

**Ron Wilkes, Integral Property Loss Consultants**

### **FLOODS**

#### **WHAT TO DO BEFORE & AFTER**

Beyond the human toll taken in lives and suffering, flood damage costs Canadian taxpayers millions of dollars annually.

Though governments at every level work to reduce the risk of floods, the first line of defense always rests with the individual. Each of us has a responsibility to protect our homes and families to the greatest extent possible. By planning ahead and taking sensible precautions, you can do your part to minimize flood damage.

Flood threats to particular areas can usually be forecast in a number of ways:

- § by constant evaluation of rising water tables that result from heavy rain
- § through surveys of snow conditions in river drainage basins
- § by meteorological observations and forecasts.

Flash or sudden flooding, in which warning time is extremely limited, can result from other causes such as earthquakes, tsunamis or tidal waves, hurricanes, violent storms or bursting of dams.

In all cases, local government authorities try to keep residents informed of developments in areas most likely to be affected by flooding. Regular media advisories will recommend actions people should take to limit or prevent disaster. As the need arises, more detailed instructions by municipal or provincial authorities will be given.

### **BEFORE THE FLOOD**

#### **ELECTRICITY**

When there is immediate danger of flooding, shut off all power in your home.

#### **HEATING EQUIPMENT**

Special precautions should be taken to safeguard or minimize damage to electrical, natural gas or propane heating equipment. If there is enough warning time, consult your supplier for instructions on how to proceed.

#### **GENERAL PRECAUTIONS**

Ensure that you have a battery-powered radio in working order, with spare batteries, to listen to instructions from your local station.

Prepare an emergency survival kit that includes food, water and medical supplies

in an easy-to-carry container. In addition to the battery-powered radio and spare batteries, it should contain at least the following items:

- \$ flashlight with spare batteries
- \$ warm clothing, including waterproof outer garments and footwear
- \$ blankets
- \$ all necessary medication
- \$ infant care items
- \$ personal toiletries
- \$ identification for each member of your household
- \$ any important personal and family documents.

Move furniture, electrical appliances and other belongings to floors above ground level.

Remove such toxic substances as pesticides and insecticides from the immediate area to prevent pollution.

Remove toilet bowls, and plug basement sewer drains and toilet connections with a wooden plug.

Disconnect eaves troughs if they are connected to the house sewer.

In some cases, homes may be protected by using sandbags or polyethylene barriers. But this approach requires specific instructions that must be obtained from your local emergency officials.

## **EVACUATION**

Vacate your home when you are advised do so by local emergency authorities. Ignoring such a warning could jeopardize the safety of your family or those people who might eventually have to come to your rescue.

When you leave, take your emergency survival kit with you.

Follow the routes specified by officials. Don't take shortcuts. They could lead you to a blocked or dangerous area.

Make arrangements for pets.

Should time allow, leave a note informing others when you left and where you went. If you have a mailbox, leave the note there.

If you are evacuated, register with the reception center so that you can be contacted and reunited with your family and loved ones.

If you are using your car, try not to drive through flood waters. Fast water can sweep your car away. However, should you be caught in fast rising waters and your car stalls, leave it behind. Always consider your safety and the safety of others first.

## **AFTER THE FLOOD**

Following a flood, it is important to restore your home to good order as soon as possible to protect your health and prevent further damage to your house and its contents.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation has prepared the following handy checklist to help you organize your clean-up. However, this information is provided as self-help advice only.

### **BEFORE YOU BEGIN**

Exercise caution when re-entering your home. Avoid electrical shock by wearing rubber boots in an area flooded with more than 5 cm (2 in.) of standing water.

### **ELECTRICITY**

Keep extension cords out of the water. If the power is on in the flooded area, shut it off immediately at the breaker box.

If conditions are wet around the breaker box, stand on a dry board and use a dry stick to turn off the switch.

Consult with your local electrical utility if you require assistance.

### **THE BUILDING**

Make sure the building is structurally safe. Look for buckled walls or floors. Watch for holes in the floor, broken glass and other potentially dangerous debris.

### **WATER**

Flood water can be heavily contaminated with sewage and other pollutants, and pose a serious health hazard. If through taste, color or odor you suspect that your drinking water has been contaminated, purify it before drinking either by boiling it for 10 minutes or adding purification tablets. If you choose to chlorinate your water with a non-perfumed bleaching compound, add one drop per litre of water, or three drops per litre of cloudy water, and allow it to stand for 30 minutes before consuming.

Household items that have been flood-damaged will have to be bagged, tagged and discarded according to local regulations.

### **EQUIPMENT**

Assemble equipment and supplies, which should include:

- § gloves, masks and other protective gear
- § pails, mops, squeegees and plastic garbage bags
- § chlorine bleach and non-ammonia dishwashing detergent

(Note: Never mix bleach with ammonia since the fumes produced together are toxic.)

- § large containers for soaking bedding and clothing, and lines to hang them until they are dry.
- § You may also need to rent extension cords, submersible pumps, wet/dry shop vacuums, a carbon monoxide sensor, and dehumidifiers, fans or heaters.

Remember to store all valuable papers that have been damaged in a freezer until they are needed.

Record details of flood damage, by photograph or video if possible. Register the amount of damage to your home with both your insurance agent and local municipality immediately

## **FIRST STEPS IN CLEAN-UP**

### **WATER DAMAGE**

Immediately add about 2 litres of chlorine bleach to standing water.

Do not occupy a house that still contains standing water.

Remove water from your flooded home slowly. Drain it in stages - about a third of the volume daily. If the ground is still saturated and water is removed too quickly, it could cause the walls or the floor to buckle.

Use pumps or pails to remove standing water, followed by a wet/dry shop vacuum to mop up the rest.

For instructions on how to disinfect and restore wells and cisterns, contact your local or provincial health authorities or emergency measures organization.

### **HEATING**

Do not heat your home to more than 4 degrees Celsius (about 40 degrees Fahrenheit) until all water is removed.

If you use gasoline-, kerosene or propane powered pumps or heaters, buy and install a carbon monoxide sensor. Combustion devices can produce large amounts of lethal carbon monoxide when out of tune or improperly ventilated.

### **DIRT AND DEBRIS**

Remove all soaked and dirty materials and debris. Break out walls and remove drywall, wood paneling and insulation at least 500 mm (20 in.) above the high-water line.

Remove residual mud and soil, furniture, appliances, clothing and bedding.

Hose down any dirt sticking to walls and solid-wood furniture. Then rinse several times.

Wash and wipe down all surfaces and structures with chlorine bleach, ensuring there is adequate cross ventilation to remove fumes. Then rinse again. Wear a charcoal respirator (which can be obtained at major safety supply or hardware stores) when using bleach in any closed space.

Wipe down surfaces that have not been directly flood-affected using a solution of one part chlorine bleach to four parts cold or tepid water, mixed with a small amount of non ammonia dishwashing detergent. Then rinse.

## **STRUCTURES**

Ventilate or dehumidify the house until it is completely dry. Tape clear food wrap to sections of material. If these sections are still damp inside, they will turn darker than the surrounding material. Dry until this does not occur.

Rinse, then clean all floors as quickly as possible. Replace flooring that has been deeply penetrated by flood water or sewage.

Clean all interior wall and floor cavities with a solution of water, chlorine bleach and non-ammonia dishwashing detergent and dry thoroughly.

If regular checks reveal mold, kill it with chlorine bleach. Mold can lead to serious health problems.

## **FLOOR COVERINGS**

Carpets must be dried within two days. For large areas, hire a qualified professional to do the job. Carpets soaked with sewage must be discarded immediately.

## **WATER-DAMAGED HEIRLOOMS AND ANTIQUES**

### **GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

Time is of the essence to prevent further damage. Wet items will be heavy and fragile, so keep them well-supported when handling, drying, or freezing. Relocate items to a cool, dry location as soon as possible. Freeze books, paper, and textiles until they can be properly treated, and consult a conservator before attempting any repairs. If items are contaminated with sewage, take proper health precautions.

## **DIRT**

If dirty items are saturated, rinse with clean water if they are strong enough to withstand it; exceptions are paper, fragile items, or those with loose parts or soluble paints and adhesives. If items are only damp, let mud dry and then brush it off.

## **MOLD**

To minimize mold growth, move items to a cool, dry area within 48 hours and set up fans. Alternatively, textiles, paper, and books can be frozen and a conservator called for advice. Wet mold will smear if wiped; let it dry then brush it off out-of-doors. Materials not affected by alcohol can be lightly misted with isopropanol (rubbing alcohol) to kill mold spores. Note: Mold is a health hazard. If present, wear a face mask and disposable gloves.

## **TEXTILES (OTHER THAN UPHOLSTERY)**

- § Separate dark and light colored items to prevent staining. If colors run, rinse in clean water until the water runs clear.
- § Remove any metal attachments and dry separately.
- § Blot excess water, lay items flat, shape them, and air-dry quickly using fans; alternatively, place textiles individually on supports, bag separately, then freeze for treatment later.
- § If staining has occurred, do not allow items to dry; bag them wet and freeze, then seek the advice of a conservator.

## **FURNITURE**

First priority is to keep the wooden structure from warping or splitting, so dry slowly.

Discoloration of the finish such as ««blooming»» is secondary and can be dealt with later. Use caution with flaking paint and lifting veneers. Joints may be loose if glue is water-soluble.

- § Open doors and drawers immediately so they do not swell in situ and become impossible to remove when dry; do not force if stuck.
- § Blot excess water.
- § Lay freezer or wax paper on lifting veneer and apply weights.
- § Air-dry using fans; if necessary, shelter the item under polyethylene sheeting to slow drying.
- § For upholstered furniture remove cushions but not upholstery, and blot excess moisture from both; raise furniture onto blocks and place fans underneath.

## **METALS**

- § Move ferrous (iron-containing) metals to a dry location as soon as possible, blot excess water, blow hollow areas with warm (not hot) air, and air-dry.
- § Metals other than iron are less prone to water damage.

## **PAPER**

Most items can be air-dried. Inks or dyes that have run can be «wicked up» with the corner of a sheet of blotting paper or paper towel. Do not blot! Stains and distortions should be treated by a paper conservator.

## **BOOKS**

- § Bag or wrap in freezer paper all books printed on glossy paper, and freeze immediately to prevent pages from sticking together.
- § For other books, if not saturated, fan out pages and air-dry, using fans (set on cool) to circulate air. If saturated, freeze as soon as possible and thaw as time permits.

## **DOCUMENTS**

- § Remove documents from wet storage boxes or colored file folders; keep supported.
- § Do not try to separate pages if stuck together.
- § Where possible remove pins, paper clips, and staples to avoid corrosion.
- § Air-dry on blotting paper or paper towels, or freeze.

## **FRAMED ITEMS (I.E. PRINTS, DRAWINGS, WATERCOLORS)**

- § Remove items from frames, lay face up on blotting paper or other absorbent material, and air-dry.
- § For vellum or parchment documents, and pastel, charcoal, or chalk drawings, call a conservator.

## **OIL AND ACRYLIC PAINTINGS ON CANVAS**

- § Remove excess water by tilting and draining from a corner.
- § Relocate paintings to a dry area; use fans to increase air circulation.
- § Remove paintings from frames unless there is adhesion of the paint to the frame; do not remove paintings from stretchers.
- § Place damaged or highly textured paintings face up and raise on blocks for adequate air circulation.
- § Paintings with minimal texture should be placed face down on a padded, absorbent surface covered with tissue paper; if the stretcher is warping, place weights on the corners.
- § Contact a conservator immediately for further advice and/or assistance.

## **PHOTOGRAPHS**

Some early photographs (i.e. tintypes, daguerreotypes) will not survive immersion.

Store them in waterproof containers away from potential leaks. If other types of photographs are stuck together do not try to separate them. Prioritize for salvage as follows:

- \$ contemporary color prints;
- \$ black-and-white prints;
- \$ black-and-white negatives.

Most photographs can be either air-dried (face up) or frozen, then thawed and air-dried.

### **3. WE LEAVE YOU WITH THIS THOUGHT**

“One of the best ways to persuade others is to listen to them”

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