

Pumping Out a Flooded Basement

If your basement is flooded, don't rush to pump it out. Water in the ground outside your house is pushing against the outside of your basement walls, and the water inside is pushing right back. If you drain your basement too quickly, the pressure outside the walls will be greater than the pressure inside, which may cause the basement floor and walls to crack and collapse.

How to Safely Pump Water Out of Your Basement:

- ⚠ Never go into a flooded basement unless you know the electricity is off.
- ⚠ For insurance purposes, take pictures of your basement before beginning any work.
- ⚠ When the water is no longer covering the ground around the perimeter of your house, you can begin pumping the water from your basement.
 - ⚠ **CAUTION: Do not use gasoline-powered pumps or generators indoors as they produce deadly carbon monoxide exhaust fumes.**
- ⚠ Pump the water level down 2 to 3 feet, mark the water level, and wait overnight.
- ⚠ Check the water level the next day. If the water went back up and covered your mark, it is too early to drain your basement.
- ⚠ Wait another 24 hours. Pump the water down 2 to 3 feet again, and check the water level the next day.
- ⚠ When the water stops rising, pump the level down another 2 to 3 feet and wait overnight. Repeat the above steps until all the water is pumped out of the basement.



What to Do After Draining Your Basement:

- ⚠ Shovel out as much mud as you can as quickly as possible. The mud left behind by floodwaters poses a health hazard, and it is a lot easier to remove before it dries out.
- ⚠ Hose off the walls and floors with clean water and then disinfect them with a solution of 1 ½ cups of liquid chlorine bleach to a gallon of fresh water.
 - ⚠ **CAUTION: NEVER mix bleach and ammonia cleaning products. This will produce deadly chlorine gas!**
- ⚠ Remove the vents or registers of heating and air conditioning ducts, the wall covers for wall switches and outlets that were flooded. Clean and disinfect them as above.
- ⚠ All flexible ducting, including dryer connections, must be replaced for health protection.
- ⚠ Check your water system, including drains and utility connections, for leaks, breaks, and loose fittings.
- ⚠ Have your water supply checked for any contamination. This service may be provided by your local health department.