



## Flood Clean-up **Advice for Team Leaders**

### Information for Team Leaders preparing to go on-site

#### Be Prepared

The sites will be wet, dirty and smelly.

#### Common hazards following a flood

There are a number of residual risks following a flood that you should be aware before returning to a flood affected site. These include, but are not limited to the potential for:

- structural damage and risk of collapse
- damage to materials that could be a risk to your health including asbestos
- exposure to live electricity and water damaged electrical systems
- gas leaks
- contamination from the sewer system and/or spilt chemicals
- contaminated food
- contaminated water supplies
- slip, trip or fall hazards
- snakes and spiders that may have entered the building to escape the flood waters
- mosquitos carrying disease.

#### What to Wear (Personal Protective Equipment)

- Gumboots or solid boots with good grip soles
- Solid gloves (that are not easy to cut)
- Long sleeves and long pants
- Eye protection
- A P2 mask if you have one, if not please bring a surgical mask

#### What to bring

- Bring a buddy – you must never enter a flood impacted building alone
- Clean drinking water (do not drink the water from the site)
- A change of clothes (just in case)
- A torch
- Hand sanitiser

#### What to expect when you get to the site

Please follow the directions of the SES or other emergency response agencies. **You will need SES clearance before re-entering the flood effected area.**

#### Clearance for re-entry

Before you can enter, you must liaise with the Property team to ensure that the building had been checked and provided **clearance for gas and electrical safety**. This usually involves inspection by a licenced plumber and electrician. The Property team will organise this. If the flooding was significant (greater than 300mm) the building will also require clearance for structural stability. This involves inspection by a structural engineer or licenced builder. **DO NOT ENTER** until clearance has been confirmed.

Here is a link to the [Flood Re-Entry Checklist](#).



### Initial Assessment

Once clearance has been provided, carefully inspect the building from the outside looking for any sign of structural instability (e.g. cracks in walls, collapsed roof). If all looks ok, you may carefully enter the building with a buddy. **DO NOT ENTER the building alone, enter with your buddy.** Other helpers must remain outside.

Carry out a walk-through of the site to identify any obvious hazards and risks and determine the best approach to the clean-up. You must always ensure a clear path of exit. If walking in water, ensure that water levels are well below the top of your gumboots (maximum halfway up).

When doing the initial walk-through inspection please be careful to check that:

- the building structure is sound, and all appears safe (look for cracks in walls and ceilings and evacuate immediately if the building looks unstable)
- the fire exits are not blocked
- any fibreboard that may contain asbestos is not broken, cracked or breaking down (if there is that area is to be kept secure with no-one to be working in the vicinity)
- the sewerage system is working (check if the toilets are working, taps turn on and off)
- there are not confined or hidden spaces that people might enter.

### Pre-entry site induction

Before any of your clean-up team enter the site, you must brief them on:

- the status of the pre-entry clearances (e.g., structural, gas and electrical)
- any identified hazards and risk
- personal safety matters such as hydration, hygiene, the need to take breaks and manage fatigue
- personal protective equipment requirements (e.g., gloves, boots, long sleeves, long pants, and a mask)
- restricted areas including confined or hidden spaces
- the proposed approach to the clean-up
- equipment to be used and associated instructions for use
- allocation of clean-up tasks
- reminders about good manual handling techniques
- first aid, emergency, and incident reporting procedures
- the requirement to sign in/out and work in pairs.

### Register of those working at the site

You must maintain a simple register of everyone who comes in and out of the site.

### Hazardous manual tasks

Clean-up following a flood can be a very manual process. Please use materials handling equipment wherever possible. This might include:

- Shovels and brooms
- Wheelbarrows and trolleys.

### When lifting remember to ...

- Plan the lift - think about where you need to move the load
- Clear the path
- Move in as close to the load as possible
- Use your legs - bend your knees not your back
- Keep the load close to your body
- Do not twist while lifting or moving.