

REPAIRING FLOOD-DAMAGED FLOORS AND WOODWORK



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Scrub damaged woodwork with a stiff brush and water to remove all traces of mud and silt from corners, cracks and crevices. No repairs should be attempted until the interior woodwork has dried fully. If refinishing is necessary, delay the work until moisture has dried from the wood itself--from framing, between walls and floors and from the back of the trim. This may take several months.

After the house has dried out, it may be possible to draw some of the buckled flooring back into place with nails. Some humps may be removed by planing and sanding.

Floors that have been heavily planed may not look well enough to be used uncovered, but a smooth old floor can serve as a good base for new wood flooring, for carpeting or a resilient material such as vinyl asbestos, linoleum, vinyl or rubber tile. An underlay of plywood or hardboard over single floors will add to the wear life of tile or linoleum floors. If badly buckled, the floor may have to be taken up and relaid. If only the surface finish is damaged, the floor may be refinished after it is completely dry.

Mold on the surface of wood usually can be removed with a cloth dipped in a solution of kerosene and water or borax and hot water. Wood into which mildew has penetrated may be bleached with oxalic acid after the paint or varnish has been removed. Oxalic acid is poisonous and must be handled carefully. Label it "Poison", and keep out of children's reach. Use a solution of 3 tablespoons of the acid to a pint of water or put the acid directly on the stain. Rinse the wood well and allow to dry thoroughly before refinishing.

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