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[Music]
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An important and difficult part of cleaning up after a flood
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is differentiating which items to salvage or throw away.
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Materials that do not absorb water, like glass, plastic, marble, granite, ceramic tile and
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metal can easily be cleaned and saved. Move these items to a safe area and clean them later.
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Some materials can absorb water more slowly, like concrete, fiber cement siding, and solid
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wood products including cabinets, framing, paneling and flooring. When deciding whether
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or not to salvage these items, consider the extent of the damage, how easily you can clean
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and dry them, and the cost of replacements.
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Materials that easily absorb water, like cushions, mattresses, drywall, carpet, insulation, and
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ceiling tile may need to be discarded. Heavily damaged items should be thrown away to prevent
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exposure to germs, bacteria, and mold. You may be able to save smaller fabrics and textiles
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by putting them through the laundry. Take pictures of anything of value
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being discarded for insurance claims.
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Always be cautious when approaching items that may have been disturbed by the flood
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to protect yourself and others from hazards.
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It is important to remove the items you plan to throw away and place them outside the home
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to prevent mold growth before you begin cleaning items that will be kept.
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Place small items that will be thrown away in heavy duty trash bags for removal.
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When cleaning materials that you decide to keep you will need to follow multiple steps
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to make sure you remove all the mold and bacteria: Use a microfiber cloth or towel dampened with
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hot, clean water and detergent and clean gently to prevent mold spores from spreading. Use
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a detergent first to remove any mold before using a disinfectant if necessary.
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After gently cleaning, you may need to scrub the areas to remove any remaining mold spots.
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If you choose to use a disinfectant after cleaning, make sure the surface is free from
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dirt. Disinfectants do not kill microorganisms unless the dirt around them is cleaned first.
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Use an EPA-registered household disinfectant. Follow the label instructions to use the product safely.
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Do not mix cleaning products together, especially
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bleach and ammonia because it can create toxic vapors
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Use tools, like a wet or dry vacuum, to remove any remaining debris Allow the items to dry
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fully and if possible, use fans or dehumidifiers to speed up the drying process.
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If you have valuable items you want to preserve, a restoration specialist may be able to help.
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In the meantime, smaller items can be sealed in a plastic bag and frozen.
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For more information about disaster cleanup visit epa.gov/flooded-homes