

## **How to Gut a House**

After a week of flooding, you are finally able to make it back to your house. What a shock. It looks like someone has destroyed your home. Do not give into despair. 100,000 Baton Rougeans know how you feel. Their message for you is: You will recover. Most Baton Rougeans are back living in their rebuilt homes within one year of our flood.

### **Electricity**

Your house likely has no power. Now is the time to switch off the main breaker so you are not harmed when power is restored.

### **Video and pictures**

Now is also the time to take photos and video of everything: A/C unit, kitchen cabinets, bathrooms, closets, bedrooms, attics, cars, bikes, washer, dryers, etc. Focus on the water line and debris line around your house. Your insurer and FEMA will refer to these photos in the event of a dispute. Be sure to include a picture of your street sign and home address with your house in the background.

### **Friends and family**

This is too big of a job for a couple. You do need to ask friends, family, coworkers, and church members to help.

### **Sturdy shoes, work gloves, and face masks**

You need to protect yourself from infection. You will be working in a soiled environment filled with sharp objects. I know two homeowners who stepped on nails, the one who was diabetic lost his leg as a result of infection.

### **Clean out**

First step is to clean out the house. Everything must go. Things above the water line go to storage. Things below the waterline go to the curb. Exceptions: Hard non-porous items can be disinfected, dried, and retained. Porous substances including pressboard or particleboard furniture must go to the curb. Now is the time to pull up carpet and vinyl flooring, the house is being cleaned to the slab.

### **Drywall gutting**

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## **Biocide and Mold killing**

If you are going to use contractors to rebuild, talk to them about what biocide they will use. Most contractors will want to apply this themselves. Baton Rouge do-it-yourselfers used Bora-care or a home brew like this one using JoMax as the biocide: JoMax House Cleaner and Mildew cleaner (1gal. Bleach, ¼ gal JoMax, ¾ gallon water; in 2 gal sprayer).

## **Drying out**

It will likely take more than a week to reduce moisture in the wood to under 15% to allow rebuilding. You will need to obtain a moisture meter to check.

## **Things needed for house gutting**

Dehumidifiers, Brooms, Mops, Buckets, Brooms, Dustpans, Shop Vacs, Generators, Box Fans, Wheelbarrows, Heavy duty garbage bags, Work gloves, Towels and baby wipes, Tools to take out baseboards and sheetrock (hammers, crowbars, and small crowbars), Snow shovels for debris, Dust masks, Work gloves, Sturdy shoes to protect from nails, Razor knives and carpet cutters, Floor scrapers for vinyl and other flooring, Trash cans to haul debris, Dolly for furniture hauling, Bora-care, Chlorox, Jomax, Rags, Moisture meter, Hand sanitizer. Nice to have: A full size Dremel saw for sheetrock cutting.

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After a week of flooding, you are finally able to make it back to your house. What a shock. It looks like someone has destroyed your home. Do not give into despair. 100,000 Baton Rougeans know how you feel. Their message for you is: You will recover. Most Baton Rougeans are back living in their rebuilt homes within one year of our flood.

### **Electricity**

Your house likely has no power. Now is the time to switch off the main breaker so you are not harmed when power is restored.

### **Video and pictures**

Now is also the time to take photos and video of everything: A/C unit, kitchen cabinets, bathrooms, closets, bedrooms, attics, cars, bikes, washer, dryers, etc. Focus on the water line and debris line around your house. Your insurer and FEMA will refer to these photos in the event of a dispute. Be sure to include a picture of your street sign and home address with your house in the background.

### **Friends and family**

This is too big of a job for a couple. You do need to ask friends, family, coworkers, and church members to help.

### **Sturdy shoes, work gloves, and face masks**

You need to protect yourself from infection. You will be working in a soiled environment filled with sharp objects. I know two homeowners who stepped on nails, the one who was diabetic lost his leg as a result of infection.

### **Clean out**

First step is to clean out the house. Everything must go. Things above the water line go to storage. Things below the waterline go to the curb. Exceptions: Hard non-porous items can be disinfected, dried, and retained. Porous substances including pressboard or particleboard furniture must go to the curb. Now is the time to pull up carpet and vinyl flooring, the house is being cleaned to the slab.

### **Drywall gutting**

Now find the water line on your drywall. Water will have wicked up behind the drywall a number of inches above this line. You want clean and dry wall above your cut. Most houses are built with drywall running horizontally in four foot segments. So your if water line is below four feet, it is easier to find the seam at four feet and pull the lower drywall panels off the wall. Then remove all baseboard, door and window frame coverings, nails, and screws from the studs. Pull all wet insulation out of the wall. Open up the wall on both sides to allow ventilation to dry. Exception: Exterior walls and solid (non particle board) kitchen cabinetry can be dried from one side with direct ventilation on that side.

## **Biocide and Mold killing**

If you are going to use contractors to rebuild, talk to them about what biocide they will use. Most contractors will want to apply this themselves. Baton Rouge do-it-yourselfers used Bora-care or a home brew like this one using JoMax as the biocide: JoMax House Cleaner and Mildew cleaner (1gal. Bleach, ¼ gal JoMax, ¾ gallon water; in 2 gal sprayer).

## **Drying out**

It will likely take more than a week to reduce moisture in the wood to under 15% to allow rebuilding. You will need to obtain a moisture meter to check.

## **Things needed for house gutting**

Dehumidifiers, Brooms, Mops, Buckets, Brooms, Dustpans, Shop Vacs, Generators, Box Fans, Wheelbarrows, Heavy duty garbage bags, Work gloves, Towels and baby wipes, Tools to take out baseboards and sheetrock (hammers, crowbars, and small crowbars), Snow shovels for debris, Dust masks, Work gloves, Sturdy shoes to protect from nails, Razor knives and carpet cutters, Floor scrapers for vinyl and other flooring, Trash cans to haul debris, Dolly for furniture hauling, Bora-care, Chlorox, Jomax, Rags, Moisture meter, Hand sanitizer. Nice to have: A full size Dremel saw for sheetrock cutting.

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