

A brief guide to drying your home.

Extreme weather events and climate change are increasingly leading to costly flood damage to properties, people and infrastructure. We know [Property Flood Resilience Measures](#) do make a difference, so as part of your flood recovery process, contact the SFF for independent advice when you are ready.

Buildings affected can be anything from a bit damp to massively damaged by flood water. Here we provide some top tips for drying out homes affected by flooding. These top tips are as useful for drying up after a burst pipe as they are for a major flood and should help you understand the drying process and increase recovery time.

If insured, discuss your claim and drying requirements with your insurer **immediately**. They normally hire a contractor to do the drying for you, in which case you can concentrate your attention on [recovering from flooding](#). Delays to starting the drying process can cause further damage and add weeks and months to effectively drying your home. Do remember that during a large scale flooding incident supplies of local drying equipment will be taken up quickly as demand will be high.

If you find yourself uninsured contact the SFF for advice as we have a small amount of drying equipment we may be able to lend you. In these circumstances, always ensure that your property is safe to return to by consulting with emergency services and electricians.

Top Tips:

Always ensure that you receive a copy of the flood damage assessment report from the Loss Adjuster or insurance company, as this directly informs levels of strip out and drying required.

Remember to take the electric meter readings so you can give these to the insurance company if you can recover costs as part of your insurance claim. Drying of properties can take weeks and months to complete depending on the levels of damage.

Do ask the insurance company and contractor what qualifications and experience they have drying and restoring flood damaged properties. Ask the insurance company or contractor if they use the industry guidance on [Mitigation and Recovery of Flood Damaged Buildings](#).

What's wet? No, it's not a stupid question but the answer will affect how a building is dried and what equipment is used. Different buildings and materials dry differently.

Always ask for a drying record from the contractor or insurance company. This establishes the starting point for moisture levels and the finishing point as the building is monitored and dried.

Do note that the saltwater content for flooded properties in coastal areas can provide false moisture readings and expert advice is required.

Drying Methods:

This is the most important part of the physical flood recovery process as the reinstatement of the building cannot commence until the property is dried correctly. Do note that buildings can be overdried and cause further damage to a property.

A number of techniques are currently used, and the following gives a quick introduction.

Open drying system: Ventilation is increased within a building, which can be done by simply opening windows. For this to be effective, the outside air should be warmer and drier than the inside air.

Closed drying system: All windows and doors are shut, and dehumidification equipment is installed to remove and control the evaporated moisture. **This is the most common method used in Scotland.**

Air exchange and heat drying systems: Heating equipment is used to increase the temperature of the indoor air, which absorbs the evaporated water from the wet structural materials. The air is then either pumped out of the building or passed through machinery to remove the extra water.

Dehumidifiers:

Consider **30 litres a day extraction rate** as the bare minimum for drying a flood damaged small room. Do note that the water extraction rates claimed by dehumidifier manufactures will vary from the in-practice reality of room size, humidity, air flow, time, and temperature.

When using a dehumidifier make sure to minimise air ingress into the building. Close all doors and windows, air vents and micro cavity vents if present on your property. The only exception to this rule is if you can open air dry the property, when the outside air is warmer and drier than the inside air.

Place dehumidifiers in the middle of the room without any obstructions. If you have a large room and a number of dehumidifiers working simultaneously, they should be spread evenly in the room and away from walls.

The use of air circulation fans will increase the drying time for any property so ask your insurance company and contractor about using these to speed up flood recovery.

Use portable radiant heaters if possible for heating up surfaces, such as plaster work. Warm walls will evaporate water quicker than cold walls.

Ideally the building air temperature needs to be raised to at least **20°C** with a relative humidity of **60%** and above. The warmer the air is the more moisture it can hold, the more water will evaporate from surfaces, and the more efficiently dehumidifiers will work.

Be careful to leave cupboard doors and drawers open to allow drying and remove saturated furniture as these items can seep water for days.

If the dehumidifier collects water in a tank, ensure the tank is frequently emptied. If the tank is not emptied the dehumidifier will stop working. If it has a continuous drainage system, make sure that it can flow to a suitable drainage point.

These drying tips are designed to give a brief overview of issues to be aware of when you have flooded and your home is being dried. [The Guidance and standards for drying flood damaged buildings](#) provides comprehensive guidance.

Remember – Flooding brings about loss, loss of home and personal effects. This is a like bereavement and can often take time to [recover from flooding](#)

Contact admin@scottishfloodforum.org or call our flood support enquiry line on 0131 563 9392 for further details and information.