CARLISLE CITY COUNCIL

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Repairs to flood damaged properties

The following is taken from the Good Repair Guide 11 ‘Repairing flood damage’ parts 1-4. (BRE, 1997).

Immediate action

- Check for external structural damage.
- Shut off electricity supply.
- Shut off gas appliances.
- Check drainage system.
- Contact insurers.
- Remove wet carpets.
- Drain underfloor spaces basements and cavities.
- Start drying the building.

External structural damage

Flooding is unlikely to lead to instability of the buildings unless there has been deep scouring of the surrounding ground which has exposed or undermined the foundations. Look for bulging or dislodged sections of the building fabric and any new cracks greater than 5mm above doors and windows.

Electrical services

Employ a competent electrician to check all the affected circuits and appliances and carry out essential repairs.

Gas services

Call in a ‘Gas Safe’ registered installer to inspect and repair gas services and appliances before use.

Heating installations

Arrange for affected heating installations to be checked and made operational as soon as possible so that the system can be used to dry out the building and speed occupation. Replace wet pipe insulation.

Drainage system

Check the drains by frequent flushing of the toilet and by running taps. If water rises through the trap of the lowest appliance the drains will need to be unblocked.

Carpets

Remove wet carpets as soon as possible otherwise floor boards and chipboard flooring may be damaged beyond repair.

Underfloor spaces and cavities

Underfloor spaces and basements should be pumped out until dry. In the case of sub floor spaces this will involve the lifting of some floor boards. Cavities should be investigated and any water found released.

Start drying the building

1. Remove wet material and surface coatings that may delay drying.
2. To aid drying weak plasterboard and damaged plaster finishes should be removed.
3. Masonry walls and concrete floors may take several months to dry out.
4. Remove some floor boarding to aid the drying of underfloor spaces.
5. Check the condition of timber floor joists, as replace as necessary. Re-inspect after 1 year to check for fungal attacks.
6. Remove bath panels and lift shower trays.
7. Heat and ventilate the building. Leave internal door open and open external doors and windows when possible. If the heating is working keep the thermostat at 22 deg. C and heat for long periods. Alternatively consider using a dehumidifier and heater, but use them with care otherwise warping of timber may result. Do not ventilate the building if using a dehumidifier.
8. Clear any under floor ventilators.
9. Occupy the building if possible.

Other matters

1. Staircases can become unstable when supported on chipboard flooring weakened by wetting. Stabilise loose treads with blocks and fixings once the stair has dried. Also check the support to the staircase and strengthen with extra supports under the floor if needed.
2. If the walls are of cavity construction and have cavity wall insulation has been installed seek advice from the installers.