



FEMA

Factsheet

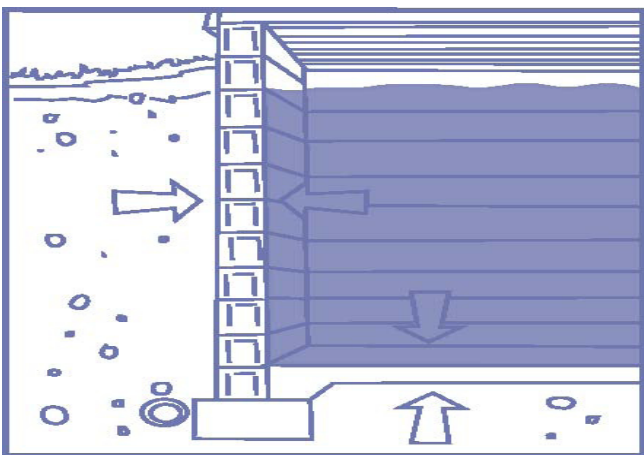
FEMA DR-1912-KY

If your basement is flooded, don't rush to pump it out!

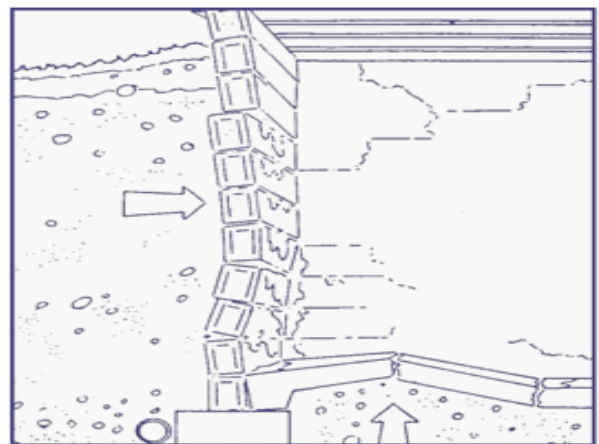


Water, in the ground outside your house, is pushing against the outside of your basement walls and the water inside is pushing right back. If you drain your basement too quickly, the pressure outside the walls will be greater than the pressure inside. This may cause the basement floor and the walls to crack and collapse.

Unequal pressure inside and outside the basement can cause the walls and floors to fail



Example of Equal Water Pressure



Example of Unequal Water Pressure

How to Safely Pump Water Out of Your Basement:

- Never go into a flooded basement unless you know the electricity is off.
- For insurance purposes, take pictures of your basement before beginning any work.
- When the water is no longer covering the ground around the perimeter of your house, you can begin pumping the water from your basement.
- CAUTION: Do not use gasoline-powered pumps or generators indoors as they produce deadly carbon monoxide exhaust fumes.
- Pump the water level down 2 to 3 feet, mark the water level, and wait overnight.
- Check the water level the next day. If the water went back up and covered your mark, it is too early to drain your basement. Wait another 24 hours.
- Pump the water down 2 to 3 feet again, and check the water level the next day.
- When the water stops rising, pump the level down another 2 to 3 feet and wait overnight. Repeat the above steps until all the water is pumped out of the basement

What to Do After Draining Your Basement

- Shovel out as much mud as you can as quickly as possible. The mud left behind by floodwaters poses a health hazard, and it is a lot easier to remove before it dries out. Hose off the walls and floors with clean water and then disinfect them with a solution of 1 ½ Cup of liquid chlorine bleach to a gallon of fresh water.
- Remove the vents or registers of heating and air conditioning ducts and all of the wall covers of any wall switches and outlets that were flooded. Clean and disinfect them as above. Be sure to have the power to these items turned off. All flexible ducting, including dryer connections, must be replaced for health protection.
- Check your water system, including drains and utility connections, for leaks, breaks, and loose fittings. Have your water supply checked for any contamination. This latter service is often provided free by your local health department.
- Before turning on the electricity, check your incoming electrical service for any damage.
- Replace any wiring, switches and/or outlets that were submerged or got wet during the flood. This may require the services of a professional.

Recommended Resource

FEMA 234, Repairing Your Flooded Home, to obtain a copy of this FEMA document call the FEMA Publications Warehouse at 1-800-480-2520 or go on line: <http://www.fema.gov/library>