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Post-flood cleanup tips

- **Before you do anything**, document your damage with photos and/or video. Check with your insurance company to see if that's enough. If you have to remodel these photos also will serve as a roadmap for any contractors who put it back together.
- **When removing drywall**, cut it as straight as possible and remove it at two-foot or four-foot marks to be most efficient. Drywall comes in four-foot sheets and you want as few cuts as possible. Taking a two-foot section off of your wall means you can make a single cut in a sheet of drywall for replacement.
- **Use bleach water in a spray bottle** to prevent mold from growing on walls or floors. Be sure to wear rubber gloves, a protective mask and eyewear to avoid injury. Wear old clothes when you do this - bleach will fade any clothing it touches
- **When removing baseboards and drywall**, remove the insulation behind it because it's wet, too.
- **Deal with anything wet as soon as possible.** Clothing, bedding and linens that have gotten wet should be laundered in hot water as soon as possible.
- **Don't give up on wood furniture immediately.** Remember wood is natural and it might survive flooding. Furniture such as a table could be taken outside so the sun can help dry it.
- **If you remove carpeting**, be careful with sharp carpet tacks glued to the floor.
- **Rugs may not be salvageable.** Before having any cleaned, make sure they're completely dry.
- **Remember that water can be anywhere.** Remove electrical outlet covers to see if water seeped in behind them. You don't want a shock when you plug something in. Also, anything in flooded cabinets would have floated and shifted, so open doors carefully. You may not mind if a can of green beans falls out but you don't want a teacup from your grandmothers' china to fall out and break.
- **Check credentials and references** of any contractor you hire. Angie's List, the Better Business Bureau and the Greater Houston Builder's Association (ghba.org) all can help. If a contractor offers references, call them.

What do if your got caught in floodwaters

By Andrea Rumbaugh

High water has taken a toll on Houston-area cars.

Flooding from Hurricane Harvey has likely damaged a half-million vehicles in Texas, according to data compiled by Solera Holdings, a tech company that helps insurance companies process car insurance claims.

If your car took on floodwater, here are some tips from State Farm Insurance:

- **Don't drive vehicles damaged by floodwater** until they have been inspected by a qualified technician. It is easy to see how floodwater damages a car's upholstery and carpeting, but it is difficult to see damage to a car's engine, transmission and electrical components.
- **Don't try to start your car if it's flooded.** Starting your vehicle could cause more damage to the engine.
- **Document your damage by taking pictures.** When you visit with your claims adjuster, show them pictures.
- **Let the interior dry out.** Take out floor mats and trunk mat.

Vehicle damage caused by flooding is typically covered by a comprehensive auto policy. If your vehicle has sustained damage, start the claim process by contacting your agent or filing online. Hurricane Harvey came ashore as the fiercest hurricane to hit the U.S. in 13 years and the strongest to strike Texas since 1961's Hurricane Carla, the most powerful Texas hurricane on record, hit on Aug. 26.

Ryan May Handy contributed to this report.