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## *About This Book*

This book is published by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the American Red Cross to help people who have been flooded. It is designed to be easily copied. Permission to reproduce all or any section of this book is hereby granted and encouraged.

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Copies are also available from your local chapter of the American Red Cross. Ask for ARC 4477.

## *Introduction*

This book gives step-by-step advice you can use to clean up, rebuild, and get help after a flood. Before you start, read the flood safety precautions on the back cover and review the 9 steps summarized on the contents page.

Your home and its contents may look beyond hope, but many of your belongings can probably be restored. If you do things right, your flooded home can be cleaned up, dried out, rebuilt, and reoccupied sooner than you think. While you are doing the job ahead, you should remember 3 important points:

- 1. Play it safe.** The dangers are not over when the water goes down. Follow the safety precautions on the back cover. Your house's foundation may now be weak, the electrical system may have shorted, and floodwaters may have left behind things that could make you sick. Many flooded items, such as wallboard and mattresses, will hold mud and contamination forever. When in doubt, throw it out. Don't risk injury or infection.
- 2. Ask for help.** Many people can do a lot of the cleanup and repairs discussed in this book. But if you have technical questions or do not feel comfortable doing something, get professional help. If there is a federal disaster declaration, a telephone hotline will often be set up. You can call to get information about public, private, and volunteer programs to help you recover from the flood. Government disaster programs are there to help you, the taxpayer. You are paying for them; check them out.
- 3. Floodproof.** It is very likely that your home will be flooded again someday. Floodproofing means using materials and practices that will prevent or minimize flood damage in the future. Many floodproofing techniques are inexpensive or can be easily worked into your rebuilding program. You can save a lot of money by floodproofing as you repair and rebuild. (See Step 8.) You should also prepare for the next flood by buying flood insurance and writing a flood response plan.

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