

moisture, especially in closed-up areas.

- **Use desiccants.** Desiccants (materials that absorb moisture) are very useful in drying closets or other closed areas where air cannot move through. Desiccants like those listed below are usually available at hardware, grocery, or drug stores.
 - Chemical dehumidifier packs used for drying boats and damp closets.
 - Cat litter made of clay.
 - Calcium chloride pellets (used to melt ice in the winter). Hang pellets in a pillow case, nylon stocking, or other porous bag. Put a bucket underneath to catch dripping water. Close the closet or area being dried. Be careful. Calcium chloride can burn your skin. It will also make the air salty, so do not use this product near computers or other delicate equipment.
- **Call a contractor.** There are contractors who specialize in drying out flooded buildings. They have large fans and dehumidifiers that can dry out a house in a few days. Look in the yellow pages under Fire and Water Damage Restoration or under Dehumidifying. Be careful about contractors who inflate prices after a disaster and about out-of-town contractors who request payment in advance.

Be patient. Drying your house could take several weeks. Until your house is reasonably dry, damage caused by mildew and decay will continue. The musty odor will stay forever if the house is not dried out well.

Sort Contents and Discard Debris

You have three types of contents. They should go to three different places:

- Items you want to save
- Items to be thrown out
- Garbage

Things You Want to Save

Move things you want to save to a safe, dry place, such as the second story or outside. The longer they sit in water, the more damaged they become. Don't leave wood furniture in the sun because it will warp as it dries. To save an area rug, lay a sheet or some other material on top of it before you roll it up so the colors will not bleed. Clean it promptly.

Things You Don't Want to Save