

## After the flood, stop the mold for a better rebuild.

The water has receded and what is left is covered in silt, oil, dead stuff and it smells awful. The structure is still standing. This is the good part. The bad part is that it has to be gutted. Out goes the furnishings, sheetrock, wires etc. down to studs and concrete.

The remaining studs and concrete as well as the siding have been soaking in brackish brine water for a while. Unlike a wooden boat made with hardwood, the studs are traditionally manufactured from softwood. Softwood decays much faster in water with a high bacterial concentration like floodwaters. The water contains microscopic mold and fungus spores (to be called decay seeds) and soaks deep into the wood fibers. Continual changes in humidity will start and stop the decay causing bacteria mold and fungus (decay seeds). Washing the wood and concrete with bleach will help in the short term but is useless in the long term. The decay seeds are deeply imbedded in the wood through nail holes, cracks, and the grain of the wood. Once the humidity rises again, the decay seed re-energize and continues to destroy the wood. If the wood is left untreated and then covered with new wallboard it will only create a breeding ground for the decay seeds and may cause structural instabilities as well as cause serious health issues for the people living in the restored home.

Modern wood restoration products have radically changed the current thinking of the restoration process. No longer do you have to tear everything out and start over. Products available now will stop the decay seeds and strengthen the fibers of the wood and prevent moisture damage in the future. The easy use of penetrating products like Smith & Co's **MultiWoodPrime™** on the wood studs and siding, (any remaining wood) will remedy the above problems and may be the difference between complete tear down and restoration. **MultiWoodPrime** is unique in that it is a water thin epoxy sealer that will soak into the wood the same way water does, through it's capillary action, evaporates the excess moisture, kill the current decay seeds in the wood, and once cured will strengthen the wood fibers and prevent any future mold or bacteria from entering. The cells of the wood are transformed into epoxy-encapsulated cellulose and are indigestible to bacteria and insects alike. The day after application, the wiring, insulation and wallboard can be installed.

Concrete is much similar in absorption qualities to wood although it does not rot. Concrete absorbs dirt silt and oils. After water recedes microscopic contaminants prevent any coating from adhering to the concrete. The contaminants then attract atmospheric moisture (humidity) and create a breeding ground for new mold and bacteria. The mold and bacteria release spores into the air and breeds in this manner. This is what causes the storm drainpipe like odor in the structure. Once again decreasing the livability of the restored structure.

New coating technology again solves this dilemma. The use of **Permanent Concrete Sealer™ (PCS)** will flush out the dirt, oils, mold and contaminants and will also seal the concrete from absorbing moisture. This sealer is non-toxic, acid and acrylic free, no V.O.C. (V.O.C. is short for nasty solvents) and leaves no surface sheen. After treatment the concrete can be left alone. In colder climates **PCS** will reduce freeze thaw damage. **Damp Concrete Primer™** will assure that paint will stick to concrete that is damp or dry. This primer uses the moisture in the concrete to self emulsify and stick any known paint to the concrete.

Modern coating technology is moving beyond paint and is enhancing the life of manufactured wood products. In using these products when recovering from flooding, less demolition is required and a better quality of life is attained in the restored home.

Information about these products can be found at [www.star-distributing.com](http://www.star-distributing.com) or by calling (866) 345 3658. The author is Steven Ray - President of Star Distributing. Smith & Co manufactures products mentioned in this article.