

Stop putting your wet iPhone in rice, says Apple. Here's what to do instead

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No matter how your phone gets soaked – you're caught in a downpour, you drop it in the bath or you fall in a pool – perhaps the best-known folk remedy is to put the device in a bag of rice. The dry, absorbent rice should help suck out the moisture, rescuing your device, so the theory goes. Experts have for years pointed out that's a bad idea – and now Apple is officially warning users not to do it. "Don't put your iPhone in a bag of rice. Doing so could allow small particles of rice to damage your iPhone," the company says in a recent support note spotted by Macworld. Along with the risk of damage, testing has suggested uncooked rice is not particularly effective at drying the device. The fix may have its origins in the history of photography: the Verge traces the method back as far as 1946 as a way to maintain your camera. In the intervening years, panicked phone users have suggested risky methods ranging from attacking your phone with a hair dryer to submerging it in alcohol. So what should you actually do? Apple offers guidance for users who get a "liquid detected" alert when trying to charge their phones. First, unplug the charging cable at both ends. Then tap the phone "gently against your hand with the connector facing down to remove excess liquid". Leave it to dry for at least half an hour, and then – if the phone and cable are "completely dry" – try charging the device again. If that attempt fails, try again a day later. Apple's new support documentation includes two other warnings if your phone gets doused: "Don't dry your iPhone using an external heat source or compressed air." "Don't insert a foreign object, such as a cotton swab or a paper towel, into the connector." If your phone isn't functioning at all, turn it off right away and don't press any buttons. The next steps depend on your specific circumstances, but broadly speaking: dry it with a towel and put it in an airtight container packed with silica packets if you have them. Don't charge it until you're sure it's dry. There are a few more instructions for iPhones dropped in water that are worth memorizing – because even if many of today's phones are water-resistant, liquid disaster has a way of sneaking up on you.