

# Some things to know about Water Mitigation

Water mitigation is the process of reducing or preventing the amount of water damage that happens after a flood or a permeating leak. It prevents additional damage by taking fast, appropriate actions.

Water mitigation is needed after plumbing failures or when storms cause water to rush into your home. Soaked rugs, damaged walls, warped flooring and ruined furniture are only the beginning if mitigation is not engaged quickly. Specific steps are taken to reduce property destruction, to prevent further water damage and to restore your property to its full value.

Seeping water damage is progressive, pervasive and can mean valuable objects may become permanently damaged – especially if emergency response is delayed beyond the first 48 hours.

Water damage is usually caused by a plumbing failure. When moisture seeps into anything of value there are immediate steps that can be taken to reduce the amount of long-term damage that results.

## Why Can't I Get a Solid Estimate Prior to Work being performed??

There are actually a number of reasons why estimates are not normally supplied for water damage drying and mitigation services. First and foremost, when a water damage loss or flood occurs to a property, **time is of the essence**. Even small delays in getting the mitigation and drying started can result in a substantial amount of additional damage, and associated cost, to the property. **The Insurance Industry, which has spent countless billions of dollars paying water damage claims, does not require Mitigation Companies to provide a quote prior to performing the work.** These Insurance Companies have learned that the delays associated to waiting for an estimate only increases the overall damage to the property as well as the amount the insurance company ends up paying out in damages.

Also, **the property owner's insurance policy typically includes a clause which places an obligation on the property owner to take action to mitigate further damages. This requires the property owner to protect the property from this further damage.** In a water damage loss (pipe break, etc.) or flood, proper and timely drying and mitigation are considered necessary to stop secondary water damage. The water will continue to wick from wet building materials to dry materials, often in hidden locations such as inside wall cavities, etc., until there are no longer any dry materials thereby causing this secondary damage. Timely, professional mitigation initially slows and finally stops this process. **If the property owner fails to mitigate a water loss in a timely manner, the Insurance Company can, and will, refuse to pay for any additional damage (secondary damage) caused by this delay.** As a result, secondary property damage as a result of unnecessary delays while the property owner waits for price quotes could cost the property owner directly.

In addition to secondary water damage, **Mold** contamination is also a factor. Delaying mitigation even less than a day in some cases can result in the beginning of mold growth. Once mold begins to grow, costs can skyrocket, increasing the overall job costs by 4 to sometimes 10 times what would have been necessary prior to mold contamination. Prompt, professional, and timely drying and mitigation is essential to reducing costs when a water damage loss or flood occurs. Any delays, even delays associated to getting estimates, generally only increase the overall cost.

Last, it is virtually impossible for a Mitigation Company to accurately estimate the price of a water damage drying and mitigation job. There are too many variables that can affect the nature of the drying, and the time and labor that may be needed to properly dry out a building. As the property dries, water infiltration, by its very nature, will still continue to wick from wet to previously dry areas until the drying is complete. As well, different building materials dry out at different rates. For instance, drywall is more easily dried out when compared to plaster. Also the humidity and temperature within the home, as well as the weather conditions outside, can often affect the drying and mitigation services to your property. It is impossible for any professional Mitigation Company to predict where water will migrate during the drying process or how quickly the property will dry. This makes it impossible to provide any accurate estimate.

# Don't Delay Water Mitigation Services

Shop vacuums or companies with only carpet drying equipment cannot prevent water from wicking up walls, under baseboards and molding or into sill plates. Water will penetrate through floor coverings into subfloors, eventually causing damage to rooms below.

If internal building humidity is not controlled, undamaged objects safe from the original flood damage could be ruined as a result of absorbing moisture from the air. Structures not dried out quickly enough or properly will become a food source for mold, later causing a need for even more professional mold removal services.

## Loss assessment and evaluation

A professional water damage restoration service will document the materials which were affected by the water damage and refer to industry standard pricing guides in order to determine the proper value of the residence's materials lost and their service.

Water damage services include the inspection of the affected area(s) with water sensing equipment such as probes and other infrared tools in order to determine the source of the damage and possible extent of area affected. Restoration services would then be rendered to the residence in order to dry the structure, sanitize any affected or cross contaminated areas, and deodorize all affected areas and materials. After the labor is completed, water damage equipment including, but not limited to, air movers, air scrubbers, dehumidifiers, wood floor drying systems, and sub floor drying equipment is left in the residence. After a period of three to four days after the labor is completed, a reevaluation of the residence is taken to monitor the drying process, and any equipment not further needed is removed as to keep the charges under control.

## Principles in drying

### Structural and contents consideration

When working within a residence, it is often the case that those who are performing the water damage restoration must work with and around the contents of the home. This includes, but is not limited to, furniture, electronics, books, and any other materials that may have been affected by the water damage. The moving around of the said contents is often referred to "contents manipulation." Water damage restoration firms often bill content manipulation on a per hour basis.

Contents may also require treatment due to the effects of water damage. This may include, but is not limited to, sterilization, sanitization, deodorization, drying, and storing of said contents. Other contents may simply be unsalvageable or the cost of having it salvaged would exceed its current value. In these cases, the contents would be discarded.

### Monitoring

After the water has been extracted and any non-salvageable materials have been removed, water damage professionals should place drying equipment according to industry guidelines for capacity in the affected areas. **Industry standards state that drying vendors should return to the residence at regular time intervals, preferably every twenty-four hours, to monitor the equipment, temperature, humidity, and moisture content of the affected walls, contents, or other affected materials. Should one area be dry and another affected area still wet, the firm will relocate or remove equipment accordingly.**

### Completion

Once temperature, humidity, and moisture content are deemed acceptable according to industry standards, drying equipment is removed and the drying process is complete.

There are defining criteria and methods to be used for assessing water damage and establishing restoration procedures, but because of the unique circumstances of every water damage restoration project, it is impractical to issue blanket rules that apply to every situation.