

Water Damage - Cleanup and Restoration



*EH&S Fact Sheet
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ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY

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Use the following guidelines for responding to clean water damage that has occurred within **24-48** hours to prevent mold growth* **Move all items away from wet walls and floors.**

Water-Damaged Material†

Actions

Books and papers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For non-valuable items, discard books and papers.• Photocopy valuable/important items, discard originals.• Freeze (in frost-free freezer or meat locker) or freeze-dry.
Carpet and backing - dry within 24-48 hours§	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remove water with water extraction vacuum.• Reduce ambient humidity levels with dehumidifier.• Accelerate drying process with fans.
Ceiling tiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discard and replace.
Fiberglass or Cellulose insulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discard and replace.
Concrete or cinder block surfaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remove water with water extraction vacuum.• Accelerate drying with dehumidifiers, fans, and/or heaters.
Hard surface, porous flooring§ (Linoleum, ceramic tile, vinyl)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vacuum or damp wipe with water and mild detergent and allow to dry; scrub if necessary.• Ensure underflooring is dry; dry underflooring if necessary.
Electronic Equipment Computers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contact department IT staff for assistance.• Use extreme caution when attempting to check equipment.
Upholstered furniture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remove water with water extraction vacuum.• Accelerate drying with dehumidifiers, fans, and/or heaters.• Piece may not dry completely dry within 48 hours. Consult a restoration/water damage professional specializing in furniture if the piece is valuable.
Wallboard (Drywall and gypsum board)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May be dried in place if there is no obvious swelling and the seams are intact. If not, remove, discard and replace.• Ventilate the wall cavity, if possible.
Window drapes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Follow manufacturer's cleaning instructions.
Wood surfaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remove moisture immediately and use dehumidifiers, gentle heat, and fans for drying. (Heat hardwood floors cautiously.)• Treated or finished wood surfaces may be cleaned with mild detergent and clean water and allowed to dry.• Wet paneling should be pried away from wall for drying.

* If mold growth has occurred or materials have been wet for more than 48 hours, consult Environmental Health and Safety Office for guidance. Even if materials have dried within 48 hours, mold growth may have occurred. Items may be tested by professionals if there is doubt. Note that mold growth will not always occur after 48 hours; this is only a guideline.

If you know/suspect that the water source is contaminated with sewage, chemical, or biological pollutants, OSHA requires Personal Protective Equipment and containment. If you and/or your remediators are unfamiliar contaminated water situations, an experienced professional should be consulted. Use fans only after determining that the water is clean or sanitary.

† If a particular item(s) has high monetary or sentimental value, you may wish to consult a restoration/water damage specialist.

§ The subfloor under the carpet or other flooring material must also be cleaned and dried.

Please contact EH&S for more information.

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