



**Tips for Preventing & Dealing
with Water & Sewage Damage**

Water is known for penetrating structural cavities and creating growing pockets of saturation without the knowledge of the homeowner. Unfortunately, finding the source of such water damage often requires sophisticated tools and technology. If the moisture remains undetected, it can cause damages that eventually lead to an expensive restoration process. As part of this process, IICRC-certified restoration specialists must dry the building using specialized tools and equipment to locate and stop the source that is causing the damage. They will also continue to monitor conditions carefully to help prevent future issues and problematic mold. The tips below will help you address water and sewer backup damage.

Flood Cleanup Tips

Always make sure that it is safe to enter a building that was previously flooded. You can do this by looking for structural damages that may create falling dangers, electrical hazards, and other issues. Wear rubber boots and gloves, as well as a safety hat that does not conduct electricity. A respirator will help protect you from airborne health hazards. If the building is known to contain asbestos, lead paint, or other harmful substances, contact a qualified professional for help. You should also follow these important cleanup tips:

- Act quickly to minimize the severity of the damage and prevent mold growth.
- Ventilate the flooded area to help it dry faster.
- Assess the damages to your personal belongings as well as the structure of the property; make a list of all damages.
- Take photos of the damages.
- If sewage is present, leave and contact a professional to complete the inspection.
- Expose pockets of saturation such as layers between building materials to help them dry.
- When it is safe to do so, clean the area as much as possible.

- Confirm that all pockets of moisture have been thoroughly dried before starting reconstruction.

Sewage Backup Tips

Sewage can be one of the biggest dangers associated with water damage. The bacteria and pathogens commonly found in it can cause serious health problems for homeowners, their children, and their pets. Here are some important tips for dealing with sewage:

- Anyone working on a sewage problem should have current Hepatitis B and other important vaccinations.
- Anyone who is on prescription drugs or chemotherapy should not work around sewage.
- People with immune disorders, pregnant women, elderly adults, and young children should not be near sewage.
- The affected building must be evacuated unless the sewage-damaged area is effectively sealed off.
- Textiles, carpets, and padding should be replaced completely and not washed.
- Sewage-saturated drywall must be discarded and replaced.
- Only trained professionals should perform sewage remediation tasks, and an environmental professional should inspect the property afterward.

Be sure to complete these tasks before attempting to reoccupy the home. Living in a home with mold and improperly treated sewage damage can have expensive and lasting effects on your health. To learn more about this topic and to make sure your property is fully protected from this type of damage, contact one of our insurance advisors about water and sewer backup coverage.