

Emergency Steps to Take for Your Property

Water Damage

DO

DO prop up upholstery. Remove all loose cushions and prop up for even more drying.

DO remove area rugs, and pick up any books, magazines, or other items that may be sitting on a wet wall-to-wall carpet or floor.

DO open suitcases and other storage containers and dry them in sunlight, if possible.

DO protect furniture. Place aluminum foil under furniture legs on wet carpeting. Open, but don't force, drawers and cabinet doors to dry out interiors.

DO protect valuables. Remove paintings and other artwork to a safe and dry place.

DO dry clothing. Dry all garments as soon as possible. Hang fur and leather goods to dry at room temperature.

DO turn water off and call a plumber for repairs.

DO use caution; water can cause floors to be slippery.

DO remove as much excess water as possible. Mop floors and, in cooler weather, open windows. In warmer weather, turn on the A/C only if it's safe to do so.

DON'T

DON'T use a household vacuum cleaner to remove water.

DON'T operate TVs, radios, computers, ceiling fans or any other electrical appliance while standing on wet carpets or floors, particularly concrete or tile floors.

DON'T touch outlets or plugs; don't plug or unplug any electrical appliances.

Mold Damage

DO

DO fix water problems. Mold needs moisture to develop. If you see mold, it's important to identify and stop the moisture source. Fix plumbing leaks and dry all areas thoroughly.

DO clean small areas of mold. Once the moisture problem has been fixed, small amounts of mold (less than 10 square feet) can be cleaned by scrubbing hard surfaces with household detergent and water.

DO dry the area, once cleaned, as quickly as possible to prevent reoccurrence. Fans in a controlled environment can speed up the drying process.

DO perform regular inspections of your home and property. Inspect ceilings and walls for water staining, check for drips or signs of water leaking at all supply lines, sinks, toilets, ice maker, etc. Make sure your A/C filters are changed regularly. Service your HVAC system once a year. Make sure gutters are cleared and downspouts are pointed away from the foundation to prevent water accumulation within the house.

DON'T

DON'T ignore it. Mold poses a serious health issue, especially if you already have respiratory issues. Molds produce allergens, irritants, and even potentially toxic substances.

DON'T use bleach. While bleach kills live mold, it does not kill mold spores. Additionally, treating mold with bleach and water actually feeds further growth.

DON'T dry until the mold is cleaned. Drying an area with mold before cleaning it can actually spread it.

Fire and Smoke Damage

DO

DON'T

DO wash both sides of the leaves of houseplants with softened water.

DO shut off ventilation systems, including your central A/C or heating system and contact a licensed HVAC contractor.

DO discard damaged foods and drinks. Discard any open goods and canned or packaged foods that were close to the fire.

DO empty the refrigerator and freezer. If the electricity is off, empty the freezer and refrigerator completely and prop open the doors.

DO protect kitchen and bathrooms. If the heat is off and the weather is freezing, pour one tablespoon of antifreeze down sinks, toilet bowls and tubs. Clean and protect chrome on faucets and appliances with a light coating of oil such as WD-40.

DON'T clean or paint walls until the smoke and soot damage is repaired, to avoid the damage from setting permanently.

DON'T clean carpets or upholstery until the smoke and soot damage is repaired, to avoid the damage from setting permanently.

DON'T clean or repair electrical appliances. Electrical appliances that may have been close to the fire, heat or water should be examined by a trained repair technician.

DON'T launder or clean clothing without consulting with a damage restoration company.

DON'T turn on any ceiling fixtures, such as a light or a fan, if the ceiling is wet. Avoid rooms where ceilings sag due to a buildup of water.