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# Disaster Restoration – Tips

## Tips for Water, Fire, and Smoke Damage

If you're in the midst of a water, fire, or smoke disaster, know that we will be there when you call us. In the meantime, here are some ways to mitigate the damage yourself.

### ***What to do if you have water damage***

- If the outside temperature is above 60 degrees, use dehumidifiers if available.
- Use fans to circulate the air and assist drying.
- Remove as much water as possible by mopping and blotting.
- Wipe furniture dry.
- Lift draperies off carpet, loop through a coat hanger, and place the hanger on the drapery rod.
- Prop up wet furniture cushions for even drying and place small wood blocks or aluminum foil under furniture legs.
- Remove wet area rugs or other floor coverings.
- Open furniture drawers, closet doors, and luggage to enhance drying.
- Move photos, paintings, and art objects to a safe, dry location.
- Remove wet fabrics and dry them as soon as possible. Hang furs and leather goods to dry separately at room temperature.
- Remove damp books from shelves and spread out to dry.
- If damage occurs during a cool season, leave heat on; if in summer, use an air conditioner if available.

### ***Important warnings on water damage***

- Do not use an ordinary household vacuum to remove water.
- Do not use electrical appliances while on wet carpet or wet floors.
- Do not go into rooms with standing water if the electricity is still on.
- Do not lift tacked down carpet without professional help. Lifting the carpet incorrectly could promote shrinkage.
- Do not wait to call for professional help. Damage from the water and bacteria growth can begin within hours.

## ***What to do if you have smoke/fire damage***

- Blow off or brush-vacuum any loose soot particles from upholstery, drapes, and carpets.
- Cover carpeted traffic areas with towels or old linens to prevent additional soiling.
- Discard open food packages. The food could be contaminated.
- If electrical service is off, clean out your freezer and refrigerator. Leave the doors propped open or place charcoal in the unit.
- Send clothing with heavy smoke damage to a qualified professional dry cleaner that specializes in smoke damage.
- Clean Formica and chrome fixtures in the kitchen and bathroom to prevent permanent tarnishing.
- Wipe residue from porcelain bath fixtures to prevent etching.
- Wipe the leaves of houseplants to remove smoke residue.
- Change the air filter on your furnace if it uses forced hot air.
- Tape cheesecloth over intake and outlet air registers to capture any loose soot in the air. This is even more effective if the cheesecloth is damp.
- If the outside temperature is above 60 degrees, air out the house to reduce smoke odor.

## ***Important warnings on smoke and fire damage***

- Do not attempt to wash any papered or flat painted walls without consulting your professional cleaner. Incorrect cleaning procedures could compound the soot residue problem.
- Do not attempt to clean carpets or upholstered furniture. Again, incorrect procedures could increase damage.
- Do not use electrical appliances that have been close to fire or water before having them checked. They could malfunction.
- Do not use ceiling fixtures if the ceiling is wet. A short circuit could result.
- Do not touch anything. Soot on your hands can permeate upholstery, walls, and woodwork, causing further damage.
- Do not eat food that has been exposed to fire or smoke.
- Do not wait to call for professional help.