

Here are some tips to help you when a disaster strikes!

## FIRE & SMOKE

**After fire damage it is natural to want to jump right in and clean the building and contents. Timely action can be a great help, but incorrect action can jeopardize or impede satisfactory restoration.**

### Things you CAN do...

- ▶ Prevent additional soiling by covering carpeted traffic areas with towels or old linens.
- ▶ Remove loose soot and particles from upholstery, drapes and carpets by blowing off or using a brush-vacuum.
- ▶ Clean out your freezer and refrigerator only if electrical service is off. Prop the doors open or place charcoal inside.

- ▶ Avoid potential contamination by discarding open food packages.
- ▶ Send clothing with heavy smoke damage to a professional dry cleaner.
- ▶ In order to prevent permanent tarnishing, clean Formica and chrome fixtures in the kitchen and bathroom.
- ▶ To prevent etching, wipe residue from porcelain bath fixtures.
- ▶ If your furnace uses forced hot air, change the air filter.
- ▶ Wipe the leaves of houseplants to remove smoke residue.
- ▶ Tape damp cheesecloth over intake and outlet air ducts to capture any loose soot.
- ▶ If the outside temperature is above 60°, ventilate the house by opening doors and windows.

## Things you should NOT do...

- ✓ Try not to touch anything. Soot on your hands can cause further damage by permeating upholstery, walls and woodwork.
- ✓ You shouldn't try to clean carpets or upholstered furniture. Incorrect procedures could worsen the damage.
- ✓ Do not attempt to wash any wallpapered or flat painted walls without consulting your professional cleaner. If done incorrectly, this could compound the soot residue problem.
- ✓ Never eat food that has been exposed to fire or smoke.
- ✓ Never use electrical appliances that have been close to fire or water before having them checked.
- ✓ You should never use ceiling fixtures if the ceiling is wet.

## WATER & FLOOD

**Water damage arises from fire damage, broken pipes, blocked drains, malfunctioning appliances, storms and other causes. The appropriate treatment depends on the nature of the damage.**

### Things you CAN do...

- ▶ Call professional help immediately. Damage from water and bacteria growth can begin within hours.
- ▶ Use dehumidifiers if available, but only if the outside temperature is above 60°.
- ▶ To quicken drying, use fans to circulate the air. Wipe furniture until dry.
- ▶ Remove as much water as possible by mopping and blotting.
- ▶ All photos, paintings, and art objects should be moved to a safe, dry location.

- ▶ Lift draperies off carpet. One way to do this is by looping the bottom half through a coat hanger and placing the hanger on the drapery rod.
- ▶ Prop up wet furniture cushions for even drying. Place aluminum foil, saucers, plastic bags or wood blocks under furniture legs.
- ▶ Remove wet floor coverings, like area rugs.
- ▶ Be sure to open furniture drawers, closet doors, and luggage to enhance drying.
- ▶ Hang furs and leather goods to dry separately at room temperature. Removes all wet fabrics and dry them as soon as possible.
- ▶ Remove damp books from shelves and fan the pages to dry.
- ▶ Punch holes in sagging ceilings to relieve trapped water. Place buckets underneath to catch dripping water.
- ▶ If damage occurs during fall or winter months, leave heat on and open windows and doors to aid drying; if during summer months, use an air conditioner.

- ✓ Go into rooms with standing water if the electricity is still on.
- ✓ Use a household vacuum to remove water.
- ✓ Use electrical appliances while on wet carpet or wet floors.
- ✓ Lift installed carpet without professional help. Shrinkage could occur if carpet is lifted incorrectly.
- ✓ Use heat to dry closed building interiors; mildew and expanded moisture damage may result.
- ✓ Track contaminated material into undamaged areas.
- ✓ Attempt to decontaminate surfaces with sprays and other over-the-counter germicidal products.



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