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Water damage can happen to any homeowner at any time. The damage can come from a simple problem like a roof leak or can be caused by a natural disaster such as a major flood. Though water damage can be a troublesome problem, you can begin to restore your home by removing the water as quickly as possible to prevent seepage into construction materials and mold growth.



## Common Water Damage

Roof leaks are among the most common causes of water damage in the home, allowing rainwater into the rooms below. Water can run down walls, soaking drywall and flooring in all areas beneath the leak. The water can also run to other areas of the structure away from the leak itself. Broken pipes can cause water damage to floors, ceilings, drywall and areas behind tiles. Flooding can cause massive water damage to floors, walls, furniture, appliances, bedding, carpeting and electronics.

## Steps To Restoration

The homeowner's primary concern should be to remove as much water as possible and to use methods to dry materials as quickly as possible to prevent the growth of mold. Sweep out any remaining water to the outside. Open windows or turn on fans to allow air to dry the materials. If the damage occurs in winter, turn on the heat to the area to help materials to dry. Use a

dehumidifier to dry out the area.

### Salvaging Your Home Items

Some materials in your home can be salvaged after a flood. Books and important papers can be dried out. Curtains and removable upholstery can be machine-washed and dried, along with clothing items and linens. Some materials will not be able to be salvaged. Drywall that has been soaked, carpet padding, carpeting and some furniture materials may be too damaged and should be disposed of in a manner recommended by your community agencies. Mattresses should be thrown away. Have all appliances checked by a technician before using. Wash all surfaces with a solution of ¼ cup of bleach per gallon of water. Wash kitchen items carefully in soap and water. Disinfect kitchen surfaces, cabinets and shelves with bleach solution.

### Health Hazards of Mold

Fast drying of materials in a flooded home will help to prevent the growth and spread of mold. Mold can have serious health effects, especially for sensitive individuals. Respiratory irritation, cough, rashes, asthma, pneumonitis and immune system problems have all been associated with mold exposure. If you find mold spores already growing, you should take care to remove them carefully, avoiding spreading the spores that can contaminate other surfaces.

### When To Call Water Restoration Services

Families that have members with existing respiratory illnesses should consult a water damage restoration and mold remediation service to ensure that all water is removed from the home. Mold remediation requires technical training and equipment that most homeowners cannot do properly on their own. A water damage restoration company may also do mold remediation or will be able to refer you to an experienced remediation contractor.