

The Mitigation and Restoration of Water Damage

The material in this course is presented through the use of a PowerPoint presentation accompanied by hands-on demonstration and discussion.

The course begins with an overview of what the insurance industry should expect from a water damage restoration vendor. Vendors must be able to respond to water damage emergencies 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, since the cost of restoration in a water damage claim is directly proportional to the length of time the water is allowed to remain in the structure. Vendors must be restoration oriented rather than replacement oriented. The technicians should be trained in the latest techniques and equipment, with an emphasis on receiving training approved by the IICRC (The Institute of Inspection, Cleaning, and Restoration Certification). Finally, vendors approved for Qualified Vendor Programs must carry the appropriate levels of insurance, must conform to all local, state and federal regulations, and must have a written policy for handling customer complaints.

After the introduction, the presentation focuses on the types of water: clean grey and black, and the necessary steps needed to remediate each type of damage. . An emphasis is placed first on ensuring a safe working environment by checking for any structural, electrical, or health hazards associated with the condition of the loss site or the type of water involved in the loss. Demonstrators then show the class how to perform each of the steps in an emergency response using real equipment. A discussion of each of the steps accompanies the demonstration. The techniques for handling water damages of differing origins is discussed as they pertain to handling "clean" water, "gray" water, and "black" (sewage) water damages. The goal of this portion of the class is to familiarize the class participants with the process of performing emergency mitigation techniques and to emphasize the importance of providing these services as quickly as possible after the occurrence of a water damage in order to prevent ensuing damage that can occur if water damage claims go untreated or neglected.

The most significant danger associated with neglected water damage claims - mold - is then discussed in the next segment of the class. Recent articles from publications like The Standard and The Insurance Times and from newspapers across the country are discussed. Topics covered include the types of mold and the conditions they need to grow from a spore to a colony and the ways that mold contamination is believed to affect human health (with the qualification that, presently, the Center for Disease Control has not drawn a scientifically proven link between mold and affects on human health). The point emphasized in this segment is that immediate response to water damage is the most effective way to prevent mold contamination.

The art of drying a structure is the last segment of the course. The principles of psychrometrics, the goals of drying a building, and the techniques and equipment used by professionals are demonstrated. The course concludes after this discussion with a question and answer period and a course critique.