

Tips & Advice When Disaster Happens

"TRY US, LOVE US, STAY WITH US"



ServiceMaster Quality Services - Houma, La.

Learn what to do and what not to do on water, mold, fire and smoke damage

Just about every home has the potential of taking a bit of a beating from fire, smoke, water, or vandalism. It could be anything from a leaky roof to a kitchen fire to something much worse. What you do in the moments right after your home is hit could mean the difference between a small clean up and a more costly and time-consuming restoration. By taking quick action with the tips listed here you can keep the damage to a minimum. Remember, knowing what you shouldn't do is just as important as knowing what you should do. But don't worry, if the situation gets to be more than you can handle, one call to (985)872-1029 will get the experts from ServiceMaster Quality Services on the scene to start giving you the "Peace of Mind" service you expect and deserve.

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

What to do if you ever have a 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.

What not to do if you ever have a 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.
- Do not disturb mold if it is visible.



What to do if you have a smoke/fire damage:

- Blow off or brush-vacuum 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 who 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.

What not to do if you ever have a smoke/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.

Download the EPA Right to Renovate consumer brochure.

Fines for violating the RRP Rule requirements can be up to \$37,500 per incident per day!! Learn more about the rule at <http://www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/renovation.htm>

IN AN EMERGENCY, RESPONSE IS CRITICAL TO BOTH CONTROLLING THE DAMAGE AND KEEPING YOU HAPPY. WANT "PEACE OF MIND" PROFESSIONAL SERVICE?

We want you to properly handle what is hopefully a once in a lifetime experience for you and to do that please consider contacting ServiceMaster Quality Services in Houma, La. at (985)872-1029. We are available 7/24/365 to serve you.

Health Precautions & Concerns

Bacteria & Mold Hazards Associated with Water Damage

Water damaged building interiors provide a "prime" environment for the growth and reproduction of bacteria and mold. Both are parasitic, i.e., they rely on dead or decaying organic matter for food. Favorite foods for bacteria and mold are cellulose based building material, such as wood, drywall and any soiled surface. Synthetic carpet fibers do not support microbial growth but the soils attached to them certainly do. These factors, coupled with warm humid air, create the ideal environment for reproduction. Bacteria and mold may cause allergic reactions, arthritis, puffy eyes, chronic cough, rheumatism, asthma, depression and headache.

Water damage restoration must be performed by trained and certified technicians, which we have, who understand proper procedures and applications. Trained personnel will provide the necessary adjustments to the environment by altering temperature and humidity levels to deter production of bacterial and mold and setting up professional drying equipment to facilitate complete structural drying. We are also certified mold remediators in the State of Louisiana.

Breathing & Electrical Hazards Associated with Fire Damage

Structures that have been affected by fire may have strong, potentially toxic, odors. Never enter a smoking or smoldering area without the proper breathing equipment. Fires can also compromise electrical systems presenting serious electrical hazards. Do not attempt to unplug burned appliances or equipment unless you are certain that the power to the building has been shut-off. Failure to do so could result in electrical shock.

Residual water from fire fighting will add to the damage as mentioned above, creating health concerns. There may be fallen debris containing sharp surfaces, in addition to slip or trip hazards. Emergency services may be necessary to stabilize the structure, make it safe for occupancy and restoration, and mitigate against further damage.

Asbestos

Federal, state and local regulations require owners and operators of non-residential buildings and structures to conduct asbestos surveys. You can rely on ServiceMaster Quality Services to comply with federal, state and local EPA and OSHA regulations while performing disaster restoration work. For more information on regulations in your area, log on to www.epa.gov/asbestos/pubs/regioncontact.html.