



THE IMPACT OF WATER DAMAGE ON COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES AND HOW TO PREVENT AND RESTORE THEM

WHITE PAPER

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Introduction

Water damage is a common and costly problem that affects commercial properties as it can cause significant disruptions to business operations, harm employees, and result in substantial repair costs. It can be caused by a variety of factors, including leaks, floods, storms, and sewage backups. The impact of water damage can be far-reaching and can result in significant damage to the structure and contents of a building, such as weakening the structure of a building, promoting mold growth, causing electrical and plumbing failures, and exposing occupants to harmful contaminants. It's important to understand the issues caused by water damage and take proactive steps to prevent and mitigate its impact.



Issues Caused By Water Damage

Structural Damage

Water can cause serious damage to the structure of a building, including the walls, flooring, and ceiling. Prolonged exposure to water can weaken the structure and make it susceptible to collapse. In addition, water can cause warping, swelling, and cracking of building materials, which can lead to further damage and safety hazards.

Mold Growth

Mold can grow quickly in areas with high humidity and moisture levels, which are common after water damage. Mold can cause a range of health problems, including respiratory issues, allergic reactions, and eye, skin, and throat irritation. Mold can also damage the structure of the building and can be difficult and expensive to remove. Mitigating water damage can help prevent mold growth.

Electrical and Plumbing Issues

Water damage can cause electrical and plumbing systems to fail, which can result in further damage and safety hazards. Electrical systems can become corroded and short circuit, causing sparks and fires. Plumbing systems can become clogged, leading to leaks and water damage.



Prevention Tips

► Maintain Your Plumbing System

Regular maintenance can help prevent leaks and other issues that can cause water damage.

► Conduct Regular Inspections

Look for signs of water damage, such as water stains or mold growth, and take action to address any problems.

► Install Water Alarms

These devices can alert you to water leaks, so you can respond quickly to minimize the damage.

► Train Employees

Educate your employees on the importance of water damage prevention, and provide them with guidelines on how to respond in the event of a leak or flood.

Issues Caused by Water Damage (Cont.)

Business Interruptions

Water damage can result in significant business interruptions, including lost productivity and income. Businesses may have to shut down temporarily while the damage is being repaired, which can result in lost revenue and increased expenses. In some cases, businesses may have to relocate while the damage is being repaired, which can add additional expenses and complications.

Health Hazards

Water damage can result in exposure to harmful contaminants, including bacteria, viruses, and chemicals. This can result in a range of health problems, including respiratory issues, skin and eye irritation, and illnesses caused by exposure to contaminated water. In severe cases, exposure to contaminated water can result in serious illness or death.

These are just a few examples of the issues caused by water damage. The impact of water damage can be extensive and can result in significant damage to the property, health hazards, and business interruptions. That's why it's important to take proactive steps to prevent water damage and respond quickly and effectively if it occurs.



Facts and Figures

The cost of water damage can increase by over 60%



if the damage is not addressed within the first 48 hours, according to the Institute for Business and Home Safety.



The average cost of a water damage insurance claim is around \$10,000



according to the National Flood Insurance Program.

Over 90% of commercial properties will experience water damage



at some point in their lifespan, according to the Institute for Business and Home Safety.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that 14,000 people



are sent to the hospital each year due to exposure to contaminated water from water damage.

The average commercial property insurance claim for water damage was \$41,000



in 2019, according to the Insurance Information Institute.

Types of Water Damage Categories

There are three different types of water damage categories, as defined by the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification (IICRC), and they can affect the severity of the damage.

Category 1

This is clean water damage, which is typically caused by broken water supply lines, faucets, or other sources of potable water. Category 1 water damage usually doesn't pose a significant threat to human health, and the affected area can usually be restored with minimal intervention.

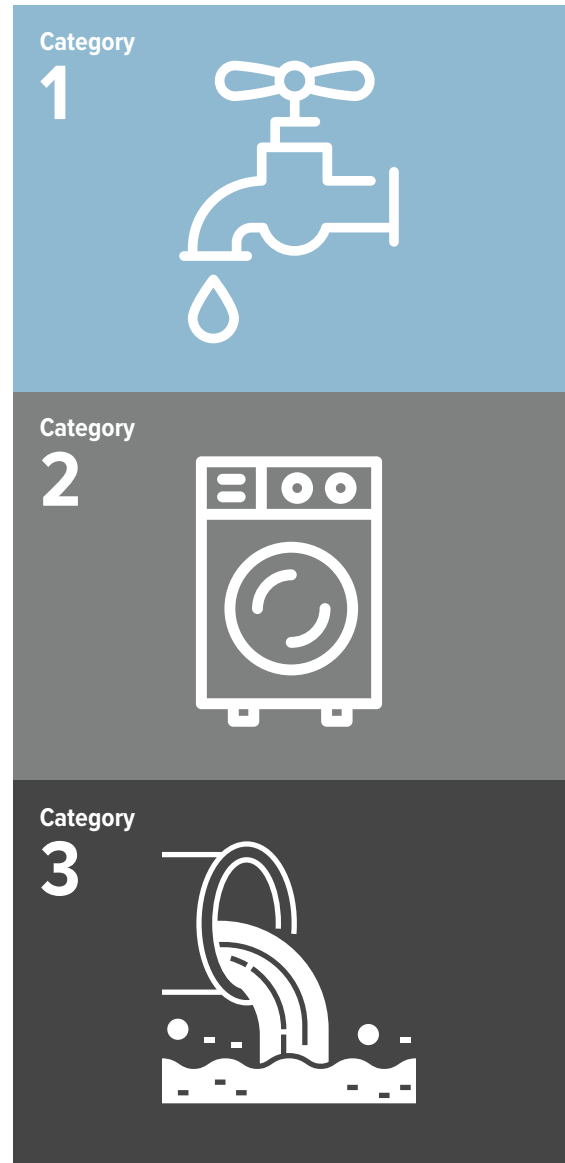
Category 2

This is gray water damage, which is water that is contaminated and contains bacteria or chemical pollutants. It can be caused by overflowing washing machines, dishwashers, or sewage backups. Category 2 water damage can pose a health risk, and the affected area may require more extensive cleaning and disinfecting to prevent the growth of harmful microorganisms.

Category 3

This is black water damage, which is water that is highly contaminated and contains pathogenic, toxigenic, or other harmful agents. It can be caused by flooding, sewage backups, or natural disasters. Category 3 water damage is considered a severe health hazard and can require significant cleanup and restoration efforts, including demolition and rebuilding in some cases.

Understanding the different categories of water damage is crucial for determining the appropriate response and the level of restoration required to return the affected property to its pre-loss condition.



Restoration Process

The restoration process is the process of repairing and cleaning up after water damage has occurred. The goal of restoration is to return the property to its pre-loss condition as quickly and efficiently as possible. This process typically involves removing standing water, drying the affected areas, and repairing or replacing any damaged materials. Restoration can be a complex and time-consuming process, but it is essential to minimize the long-term impact of water damage on a property. The restoration process should be performed by experienced professionals who have the skills, equipment, and knowledge to safely and effectively restore a property. An effective restoration process can help minimize the financial and operational impact of water damage and help ensure the safety and health of the property's occupants.

Assessment

A water damage specialist will assess the extent of the damage and determine the best course of action. This step involves inspecting the affected areas, determining the source of the water, and evaluating the damage to the structure and contents of the property. The specialist will also assess any potential health hazards, such as mold growth, and take appropriate measures to ensure the safety of the property and occupants.

Removal of Affected Materials

Any materials that can't be salvaged, including drywall, flooring, and insulation, will be removed. This step is important to prevent further damage and ensure a thorough and effective restoration process. Any items that can be saved, such as furniture, electronics, and documents, will be removed and stored for cleaning and restoration.



Restoration Process (Cont.)



Cleanup and Drying

Powerful equipment such as high-efficiency air movers and dehumidifiers will be used to remove the water and moisture, and the area will be sanitized to prevent mold growth. The specialist will also assess the air quality and use air scrubbers and other equipment to remove any harmful contaminants.

Repairs and Reconstruction

The damaged areas will be repaired and reconstructed to restore the property to its pre-damage condition. This step may involve repairing or replacing damaged walls, flooring, and ceiling materials, as well as electrical and plumbing systems. The specialist will also clean and restore any salvaged items, such as furniture, electronics, and documents.

Contents, Total Loss Inventory

An important part of the restoration process is the contents inventory. This involves a thorough assessment of all personal belongings, fixtures, and equipment that may have been affected by water damage. The contents inventory is crucial for determining the extent of the damage, for facilitating insurance claims, and for ensuring that all affected items are properly restored or replaced. During the contents inventory process, items are carefully evaluated and documented, including their condition and value. Restoration professionals will then work to restore or replace any items that have been damaged by water. This process helps to minimize the impact of water damage on personal belongings, fixtures, and equipment, and helps to ensure that the property is fully restored to its pre-loss condition. An accurate and comprehensive contents inventory is essential for the successful restoration of a commercial property after water damage.

It's important to note that the restoration process may vary depending on the extent of the damage, the type of water involved, and other factors. However, the steps outlined above are a general overview of the process involved in restoring a commercial property after water damage. The goal of the restoration process is to minimize the impact of the water damage and restore the property to its pre-damage condition as quickly and effectively as possible.

What to Look for in a Restoration Partner

The choice of a restoration provider is critical to the success of the restoration process. A restoration provider should be experienced, knowledgeable, and equipped to handle the unique challenges posed by water damage. The right provider should have the expertise to assess the extent of the damage, develop a comprehensive restoration plan, and implement that plan effectively and efficiently. They should also be familiar with local building codes and regulations, and should work closely with the property owner to minimize business interruptions and restore the property quickly and efficiently.

In addition, the right restoration provider should be equipped with the latest technology and equipment to quickly and effectively remove standing water and dry the affected areas, and should have the experience and expertise to safely and effectively repair or replace any damaged materials. Water damage may not be visible to the naked eye, particularly under floors and behind walls. Professionals use effective tools to locate damp areas including thermo-hygrometers, moisture meters, and thermal imaging cameras.

Choosing the right restoration provider can help minimize the impact of water damage on a property, reduce the risk of further damage, and help ensure a safe and healthy environment for the property's occupants.



Conclusion

Water damage is a serious problem for commercial properties, but with the right response and restoration process, it's possible to minimize the damage and get your business back up and running. Partnering with a trusted company such as Alliance Environmental for regular maintenance and inspections on water damage prevention can help you reduce the risk of water damage and protect your property and employees. In the event of water damage, contacting a specialist as soon as possible is essential to ensure a prompt and effective response.





Contact Us

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