

# HOW TO MINIMIZE WATER DAMAGE

Water leaks can be one of the most damaging conditions in your home. While it is impossible to completely eliminate all leaks from your home – whether from plumbing or roof leaks, flooding, you can take steps to minimize its impact and make your home more supportive of health. Below are illustrations of the minimal steps you can take (green), and steps that should be performed by a professional (yellow orange).



■ DIY

■ PRO

## STEP 1 : SOURCE IDENTIFICATION

If the source cannot be identified, then the water cannot be stopped and damage will continue. Continue to evaluate the conditions until the source is identified and the leak stopped or the leak is contained (roof leaks into buckets).



## STEP 2 : EXTENT DETERMINATION

Identify the extent of the water with a moisture meter (if you have one) by determining the boundaries in all directions, on both sides of the wall, rooms above and below, floors and ceilings. If you do not find all the areas impacted with water damage it will deteriorate the structure and allow mold growth.



## STEP 3 : DIY: NO OR LOW CONTAMINATION, LITTLE WATER

For small amounts of water that haven't been present for long - such as water leaks under the sink, recent rain coming through a leaky roof, or even a minor toilet overflow - the contamination level is typically not considered hazardous. The restoration steps include using off-the-shelf cleaning products.



## KNOWN CONTAMINATION, SIGNIFICANT WATER

When faced with large amounts of water that have come in from a major sewage backup or flooding or water that has been "sitting" for an extended period of time, you are more likely to find hazardous levels of contamination. Professional intervention is recommended to ensure that proper procedures are followed and additional hazards to people and structures are minimized.



## STEP 4 : REMOVE LOOSE WATER

In many cases, small leaks or puddles of water can be easily mopped up and the area under the water will completely dry. If the affected area dries within 48 hours the risk of structural damage or mold growth is greatly reduced and no further intervention is usually needed.



## REMOVE SOAKED-IN WATER

With large volumes of water, or water that has soaked into large porous surfaces (like drywall, carpet, or other flooring), professional intervention is recommended to remove the remaining saturated water that is deep inside the material and is not easily removed.



## STEP 5: REMOVE VISIBLE MOLD

Small areas of visible mold growth (less than 3'x3') or mold that is on a non-porous surface (like tile) can usually be wiped cleaned using a damp cloth and mild detergent. If you know or suspect you are sensitive to mold, we recommend wearing gloves and a N-95 mask while cleaning.



## PRO: REMOVE MOLD

Large areas of visible mold, areas of mold behind walls or under floors, or areas where building materials have been softened or damaged by mold, cannot be cleaned and must be removed and replaced by a mold remediation professional according to industry guidance documents or standards.

These actions will help you address the issues stemming from moisture intrusions and manage moisture over time. Although most of these actions and their combinations are not new, the reasons for conducting them are new to contractors. They have been trained to comply local building codes and general industry standards, not these higher standards which include the impact of the house on the people who live in them.

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