

# Preventing Water Damage



*Water damage can often be avoided with routine maintenance and assistance from qualified contractors.*

It will be well worth your time to take a few extra moments every week to check potential trouble spots in and around your home especially in the kitchen, bathroom and laundry rooms. Early detection is the key.

## Kitchen

**Dishwasher** - Periodically check under the sink and dishwasher to see if the hose connection to the water supply line is secure and is not leaking.

**Refrigerator** - If your refrigerator has an icemaker, check the hose connection to make sure it is securely attached to the water supply line.

**Sink** - Recaulk and check around sinks and pipes, check out slow drains.

## Bathroom

**Showers and Bathtubs** - Discoloration or soft areas around floors and walls near showers or bathtubs may be your first indication there is a leak. Check caulking at joints where the walls meet the floor or the bathtub, look for cracks or mold.

**Sinks** - Check under sink for signs of leaks from water supply lines or pipes.

**Toilets** - Hanging bowl deodorants can lodge deep in the plumbing system, and can block the line or create an obstruction that grease and other materials can cling to.

## Laundry/Utility Room

**Washing Machine** - Inspect washing machine hoses regularly for wetness around hose ends and signs of bulging, cracking or fraying. Replace any problem hose.

**Water Heater** - Most water heaters last 10 to 15 years. Wet spots on the floor or a rusted tank may signal a problem.

**Air Conditioning** - At the start of the cooling season, have the A/C system serviced by a qualified contractor. Make sure their service includes inspecting and cleaning the air conditioner condensation pan and drain line.

## General Tips

**Hidden Leaks** - Check by turning off faucets, all water-using appliances, and not flushing toilets for one hour. Record the water meter reading. If the flow indicator (triangular or diamond-shaped rotating button) is spinning or the meter has changed while no water is being used, a leaking pipe may exist.

**Shutoff Valve** - Know where the main water shutoff valve is located.

## Basement

**Sump Pump** - Sump pump systems assist in keeping unwanted water out of your home. Battery-operated back-up sump pumps can offer a degree of protection against power failure or failure of the primary pump. A generator can also be used to power the pump in case of a power failure. Test the sump pump before the start of each wet season to ensure it is in working order.

## Gutters/Downspouts

- Clean debris from your gutters and inspect them regularly.
- Consider purchasing gutter shields if your gutters frequently fill with debris.
- Downspouts should extend several feet away from the foundation.

## Outside Your Home or Vacation Home

**Hoses** - Disconnect garden hoses from all spigots before the start of winter.

**Holes** - Fill low spots around the house so water drains away from house.

**Caulk** - Inspect caulking around windows and doors and replace as needed where cracked or deteriorated.

**Pipes** - Before you leave the vacation home, turn off the main water line, turn on interior faucet to drain the pipes. Remember to turn off the faucets. Check on your home frequently for potential leaks during your absence.

## Roof

- Keep roof, valleys, gutters and downspouts free from buildup of leaves, twigs and other litter preventing proper drainage.
- Proper roof and eave ventilation may help extend the life of the roof.
- Preservatives available for some types of roofs may help limit weathering effects of moisture and retard growth of molds and mosses.
- Avoid walking on a roof to limit wear and tear. Only necessary repairs or inspections should warrant walking on the roof.
- Keep trees trimmed to prevent them from rubbing against the roof or from providing excessive shade.

## Watch for these warning signs:

- Missing, curling, cupping, broken or cracked shingles.
- Damage or deterioration around flashing at chimneys, vents and junctions.
- Damage or deterioration in valley areas of the roof.
- Water stains on your ceiling. Check attic around flues, plumbing, vents, and chimneys.
- Pooling or ponds of water that fail to drain from flat or low sloped roofs.

## Leak and Spill Identification

Water damage restoration is divided into three basic categories for a typical water damage project: Clean, Gray, or Black.

**I. Clean Water** - Examples may include: broken pipes, supply line leaks, any uncontaminated water.

**II. Gray or Unsanitary Water** - This contains some degree of contamination. Examples: overflow from a dishwasher, washing machine, and pooling water around home entrances.

**III. Black Water** - Heavily and grossly unsanitary "black" water arise from sewage entering a structure. Examples may include: all forms of ground surface water rising from rivers or streams as well as sea water. This will also include all forms of sewage overflow or damage. Pet waste can also factor into contamination.

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# Water Damage Do's & Don'ts

When water damage occurs, what can the average property owner do before help arrives? What should the property owner do? What shouldn't be done? Here are the do's and don'ts for how to respond if water damage strikes your property.

## The Do's

DO take action quickly and don't delay! Without prompt professional attention, a small issue with water damage can easily become a large costly one. Within hours of the water damage occurring, mold infestation becomes highly likely.

DO be careful! Turn off the electricity to affected areas, then unplug and remove any small appliances. In the event of water damage to the ceiling, be mindful of possible ceiling collapse—avoid these areas altogether. Always exercise caution on wet slippery surfaces.

DO identify the type of water damage. A clear water or "grey water" damage (not clear but not contaminated; like dishwasher or laundry overflow) can be addressed with these do's & don'ts. "Black water" from sewage or runoff is extremely dangerous and should be left entirely to professionals.

DO eliminate the source of the water if possible. Know where your water shutoff valve is located or call a plumber.

DO run you air conditioner in the summer or your heater in the winter. Use any available fans to promote air circulation as much as possible.

DO remove any wet area rugs or floor coverings. Be careful though as a saturated area rug can be extremely heavy.

DO remove personal belongings and furniture as much as possible. Water travels underneath carpet much farther than is visible and your possessions can be damaged by exposure to stain the carpet. If you can't move the furniture, then try to place tinfoil or wooden blocks between the furniture legs and the wet carpet.

DO wipe as much water as possible off of furniture using towels.

DO remove any potted plants from wet carpet.

DO move valuables, photos and art objects from the affected area to a safe dry area.

DO lift draperies away from wet areas, tacking them up or hanging them from a hanger hooked through the curtain rod.

DO prop wet cushions and pillows up to allow air-drying from all angles and tack up furniture skirts from wet carpet.

DO open furniture drawers, closet doors and luggage to enhance drying (but DO NOT force them open).

DO promptly remove any wet fabrics and dry them as soon as possible. Hang fur or leather items separately to dry at room temperature.

DO plan on having the restoration crew move items from the affected area to a temporary dry location like a garage.

## The Don'ts

DON'T wait for your insurance company to call you back before instigating the emergency services and calling a professional. Time is of the essence! Call Cleanrite-Buildrite immediately!

DON'T attempt to use a vacuum cleaner to remove excess water. Since water removal requires professional equipment may times more powerful than a household vacuum, all you ultimately are doing is placing yourself at risk for electric shock.

DON'T use any electrical appliances on wet carpets or floors.

DON'T go into any room with standing water if electricity is still on.

DON'T attempt to lift tacked-down carpet without consulting a professional. Improper lifting can result in shrinkage and carpet damage.

DON'T leave fabric items in place if they are wet. Remove and hang them to begin drying immediately.

DON'T put newspaper down in traffic areas of wet carpet to walk on.

DON'T leave any books, newspapers, magazines (any items with a high ink content) or any other colored items on wet carpet or flooring. Staining is likely to result.

DON'T turn on ceiling fans if the ceiling has been water damaged or is sagging in any way.

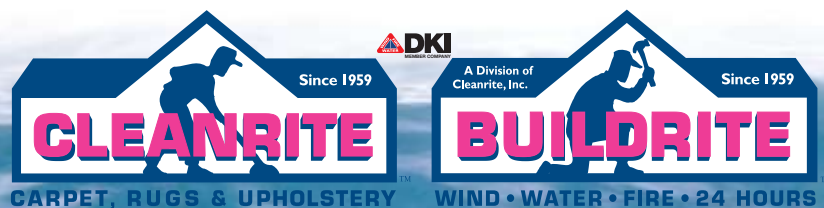
DON'T enter a room where the ceiling is sagging.

DON'T walk any more than absolutely necessary on wet carpet.

DON'T believe any carpet cleaning company can extract the water and mitigate further damage—use a restoration company you can trust.

Cleanrite-Buildrite offers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, emergency wind, water and fire damage restoration service and has over five decades of dedication to the communities it serves. Both ASCR and IICRC certified.

Call 1-800-870-0030 anytime for all wind, water, and fire damage repair needs. We've been doing it right for over 50 years.



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