

Home

W A T E R D A M A G E - W H A T T O D O

If you're facing a soggy mess from burst pipes or efforts to extinguish a fire, follow the tips below to begin getting your life back to normal and minimize further damage.

(If you've been hit by a flood and have flood insurance, call your flood insurance company's claims department immediately. Your homeowners insurance doesn't cover flood damage. For information about flood insurance, call your insurance agent and ask about the National Flood Insurance Program. It can take 30 days for coverage to begin.)

W H A T T O D O I M M E D I A T E L Y :

- If necessary, shut off your home's main water valve to prevent further damage. Open and unclog drains.
- Call your insurance company. You'll need to report the flooding right away and make arrangements for an adjuster to inspect the damage.

E N S U R E T H E S A F E T Y O F Y O U R F A M I L Y

- Call an electrician to inspect any possible electrical hazard. Don't turn on ceiling fans or use electrical outlets where the ceiling or walls are wet. The wiring may be damaged.
- Don't risk electrocuting yourself by using electrical appliances while standing on a wet carpet or floor, especially concrete floors.
- Carefully puncture small holes in sagging ceilings to relieve trapped water. Put pans underneath. After that, stay out of rooms with sagging ceilings.
- Throw away beverages or canned or packaged foods that were near the water. They may be contaminated and could make you sick.

B E G I N M O P P I N G U P T H E M E S S :

- As soon as possible, remove excess water by mopping and blotting with a towel or cloth, particularly on wood surfaces. Don't use your household vacuum to remove water.
- If possible, remove the pad under your carpet, then prop up the carpet to help it air-dry.
- If your furniture isn't too heavy, lift it enough to put its legs on dry aluminum foil, saucers, or wood blocks to prevent rust and water stains.
- Take lamps and other items off wood furniture. Mop up excess water.
- Dry fabrics as soon as possible. Hang furs and leather goods to dry separately at room temperature.
- Open drawers and doors for maximum aeration and drying. Don't force them open if they're stuck.
- Open suitcases to dry in the sunlight if possible.
- In the summer, turn on the air conditioner for maximum drying if the unit isn't damaged. (Air conditioning dehumidifies the air.) In the winter, turn on the heat, open windows, and use fans to speed drying.

