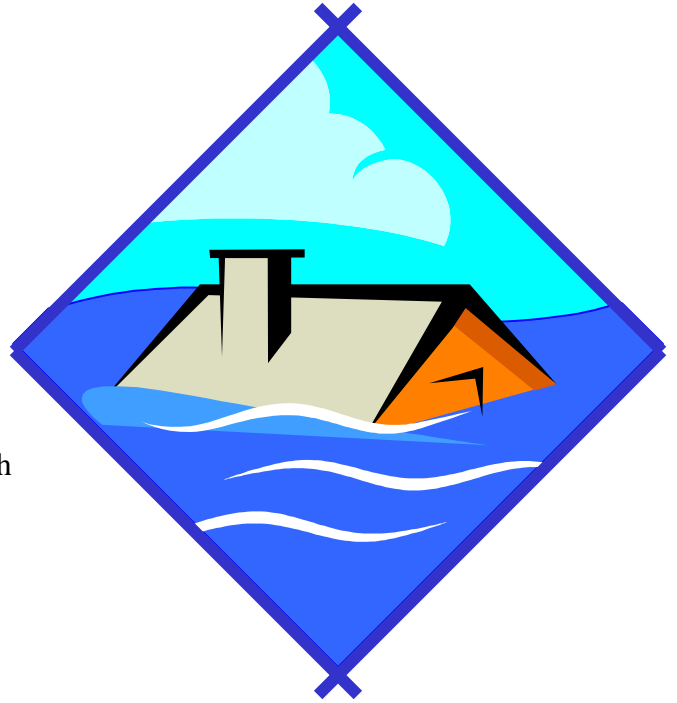


Water Damage

The water damage problem

Water damage in your home or business can harm more than just the building. It can also lead to health problems. When a building is damaged by water it allows mold and bacteria to grow. Some of these organisms can cause health problems such as headaches, infections, allergic reactions, asthma and other respiratory disorders.



Water damage facts

Water damage can occur when a building is flooded or has repeated episodes of water leakage. When a building is flooded or has a water leak, potentially harmful mold and bacteria may grow on surfaces such as carpet, wood furnishings, floorings, upholstery, wall papered surfaces and soil. These organisms can then be released into the air where they can make people sick. Sewage back ups can cause additional health problems and special precautions need to be taken when cleaning up after a sewage back up. Contact your local health department for more information about cleaning up safely after a sewage back up.

Prevention and Treatment

- Remove any standing water in the building as soon as possible (within 24 hours or less).
- Repair any leaks immediately to avoid additional water damage.
- Thoroughly dry out the building, room or furniture as soon as possible by opening all windows and doors during the day to allow drier outside air to enter the building. Use fans to speed the drying process.
- Surfaces and furniture that have dried should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.

- Absorbent surfaces such as insulation, wall board, foam rubber carpet padding and unsealed wood furniture should be replaced if they are very wet or soaked from a water leak or flood.
- Smooth surfaces such as walls, non-upholstered furniture, etc. can be disinfected with a common household disinfectant to kill molds or bacteria. The label will tell you if a cleaning product can disinfect. You can also use a solution of ¼ cup bleach in 1 gallon of water. Be sure to read label instructions and warnings before using any cleaning product.
- Small items that absorb water such as clothing, pillows, toys, etc. can be washed in the washing machine on the hottest temperature setting and then dried in a hot dryer. Adding bleach to the washing machine water will help to disinfect items.
- Larger items that absorb water such as carpet and upholstered furniture can be professionally cleaned and disinfected. However it is a good idea to get a price estimate first because it may cost less to replace the item than to have it cleaned.

For more information, contact:



ADAMS COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT
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