

# **Customer and Contractor Right to Know: Building and Occupant Survey Forms for Water Damaged Structures**

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**Now that Your Building Experienced Water Damage  
What Must You and Your Water Damage Restoration  
Contractor Agree On?**

**By Completing a Building and Occupant Survey  
Hopefully Your Questions will be Answered**

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## About the Survey Form

This survey form is designed to help the building owner and the emergency water damage cleanup contractor (contractor) to understand some of the buildings history and how building materials and environmental influences can affect building occupant's health. From this information the building owner and the contractor can agree on a strategy for drying wet building materials and bring the building back to a clean, dry and healthy state.

This survey form is also designed to identify individuals who have chemical or biological sensitivities that must be removed to a safe place before emergency water damage cleanup work begins, because, as with any cleanup or remodeling project, indoor vapors, dust and spores increase for a period of time.

The contractor is expected to sit down with the building owner and fill out this survey. The form has commonly asked questions. Some questions will not apply while other questions will. Please take the time to review all questions with your contractor and provide them with the best of information. A copy of this survey form should be made available to you.

## About Hazardous Situations and Hazardous Materials

- One purpose for completing this building and occupant survey is to identify and document conditions or hazards that may exist as a result of a water spill or flood. Once hazardous conditions are identified including electrical and gas hazards, slip, trip and fall hazards, and unsafe building hazards, a plan to identify the source followed by controlling or eliminating hazards must be completed before emergency water damage cleanup services are provided.
- Your contractor is required by state and federal codes and regulations to identify, control or eliminate hazards and hazardous conditions that are likely to affect the health and welfare of employees, building occupants and the public.
- Unknown to many of us, building materials can contain asbestos, lead-base paint and other hazardous materials such as pesticides, mercury and polychlorinated byphenols (PCBs). Once these materials come in contact with a building flood, special precautions may be required to protect the environment, cleanup workers and occupants.
- When you don't know if asbestos or lead-base paint is in your building it's OK to answer: "I don't know." Your contractor is expected to know how to determine if asbestos or lead-base paint is likely to be present.
- Further, when a hazardous building material is believed to be present that may have been damaged by water or the remediation process, your contractor is expected to know who to call that is qualified by license or certification to assess the material. Once the material is analyzed and it is positive for a hazardous substance, the independent expert will determine how the material must be treated and if special care is required to disturb or remove it.

## About Airborne Allergens

There is a section in the survey that asks questions about the general health of building occupants. This limited questionnaire is taken from EPA and other sources and modified to fit this survey. For example, a family member or a coworker in a building has asthma and allergies, is pregnant, there is a baby or elderly persons present, or an occupant has a debilitating respiratory problem such as COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease including chronic bronchitis and emphysema), these individuals must be removed from all water damaged rooms and adjacent rooms.

## About Reporting Prior Water Leaks and Spills

There are several questions asking about prior water damages. All buildings at one time or another experience minor leaks. Leaks and water stains do not typically end up damaging building materials or causing mold growth. Yet, there are occasion's water leaks cause mold growth which may affect the building's indoor air quality. Please let your contractor know about prior roof, window, siding and foundation or plumbing leaks.

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## What are some Causes of Poor Indoor Air Quality?

<b>Asthma Triggers Typically Found in Buildings</b>	<b>Asthma Management Tips</b>
<p><b>Environmental Tobacco Smoke</b> – Environmental tobacco smoke is a mixture of smoke from the burning end of a cigarette, pipe, or cigar and the smoke exhaled by the smoker.</p>	<p><b>Eliminate Exposure to Environmental Tobacco Smoke</b> – Enforce a no-smoking policy indoors.</p>
<p><b>Pests</b> – Cockroach body parts, secretions, and droppings, as well as the urine, droppings, and saliva of other pests (such as rodents) are often found in areas where food, water and unsanitary building conditions are present.</p>	<p><b>Control Pest Problems</b> – Use Integrated Pest Management (IPM) to prevent cockroach and other pest problems (e.g., store food in tightly sealed containers and place trash cans and dumpsters away from the building).</p>
<p><b>Leaks and Flooding</b> – Long-term leaks from a faucet or drain, or leakage from the roof and windows can damage interior walls, flooring and ceilings.</p> <p>Sudden and accidental flooding from a pipe break, toilet overflow or rainstorm can extensively damage building materials. When buildings are allowed to remain wet and damp for longer than 24-48 hours, these conditions can damage building materials, accelerate the age of some materials and reduce the indoor air quality.</p>	<p><b>Stopping Leaks and Eliminate Flooding</b> – Identify the source of leaks and fix them. It may be necessary to hire a licensed roofer or plumber to permanently repair the cause of leaks.</p> <p>Clean up water from leaks and floods immediately. Dry wet building materials fast.</p> <p>Government agencies, local officials and insurance companies recommend a certified water damage restoration contractor be hired to eliminate building flood damage and drying wet building materials.</p>
<p><b>Mold Growth</b> – Mold can grow indoors when mold spores land on wet or damp surfaces. In homes, commercial buildings and schools, mold is most commonly found in bathrooms, kitchens, basements, around roof seams and plumbing, and in mobile housing and portable classrooms. Mold can grow anywhere that moisture is present.</p>	<p><b>Stopping Moisture and Prevent Mold Growth</b> – Stop humidity problems through ventilation. Fix moisture problems and thoroughly dry wet areas immediately. Allowing wet materials to remain more than 24-48 hours can result in mold growth. Clean moldy surfaces with water and detergent, and then dry thoroughly.</p>
<p><b>Dust Mites</b> – Dust mites are too small to be seen but can be found in almost every home, school, and building. Dust mites can be found in carpeting, upholstered furniture, stuffed animals and toys, and bedding (mattresses and pillows).</p>	<p><b>Reduce Dust Mite Exposure</b> – Keep indoor humidity below 60%. Make sure buildings are cleaned and vacuumed thoroughly and regularly. When bedding and stuffed toys are present, ensure they are washable and wash them regularly in hot water.</p>
<p><b>Animal Dander</b> – Pets' skin flakes, urine, and saliva are often found throughout homes. They can easily be transferred on clothing then to vehicles, classrooms and businesses. Any warm-blooded animal, including cats and dogs, may trigger asthma attacks in humans.</p>	<p><b>Control Animal Allergens</b> – On the recommendations of medical specialists, it may be necessary to remove animals from the building. If this is not possible, locate animals away from sensitive people and building ventilation systems.</p>

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## Consumer Survey

As the building owner/manager, you are helping the contractor gain valuable information about the building and occupants that everyone benefits from. For example:

- ✓ When health compromised persons are in a flood damaged area of the building and they are allowed to remain during the cleanup and drying phase, their health may be impacted from dust, spores and other allergens in air.
  - The contractor in this instance should not begin cleanup work until sensitized persons leave the area.
- ✓ When the contractor removes damaged building materials that were previously water damaged, extensive mold growth may exist in walls and flooring and behind cabinets.
  - Releasing mold spores in indoor air without setting up proper containment first can affect occupants.
  - The contractor is expected to set up work area containment and negative air pressure to control dust and spores.
- ✓ When a contractor opens up a ceiling or wall that has asbestos in it, loose asbestos fibers become airborne where occupants and cleanup workers can breathe in cancer causing fibers.
  - Codes and regulations require the contractor and/or building owner to have the materials tested “before” certain types of building materials are disturbed.
  - The contractor is expected to set up abatement containment and negative air pressure in their work area in anticipation of the release of asbestos fibers.

<b>Occupant Survey</b>		
Are you aware of building occupants having health symptoms that can be affected by drying wet building materials with fans and dehumidifiers; the use of chemicals such as cleaners and disinfectants?	Yes	No
If yes, please identify the individuals: _____		
Will sensitized persons be removed from the water damaged areas prior to the contractor’s turning on fans and dehumidifiers; removing saturated materials such as carpet and pad?	Yes	No
As the building owner/manager, can you assure the contractor all occupants will stay out of water damaged areas until the contractor is able to dry and sanitize wet materials or repair water damaged areas?	Yes	No
<i>Notice:</i>		
➤ When the answer is no, the contractor is expected to erect barriers and containment to keep people out of their work area.		
➤ When occupants disturb barriers and containment, this unnecessarily increases contractors liability and it may cause some persons to experience adverse health effects.		
<b>General Building Construction</b>		
What is the age of the original building construction?	Year	
What is the age of each remodeling project and what was remodeled?	Year	
What is the age of each building add-on and its location? Please explain:		
<b>History of Prior Water Damages</b>		
Other than small drips and leaks, has the building ever experienced water damage or flooding? If yes, please explain:		
(1) What years did leaks or floods occur?		
(2) What rooms experienced water damage?		
(3) Did a professional water damage cleanup contractor complete structural drying?	Yes	No
(4) Were building materials or flooring removed and replaced?	Yes	No

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<b>Environmental Survey for Residential/Commercial Buildings Constructed Before 1985</b>		
<p><b>Asbestos</b> – EPA has classified asbestos as a “Group A,” known human carcinogen. While asbestos is a known human carcinogen, it is still in use today in some building materials. Unlike lead-based paint regulations, there is no cutoff date where asbestos containing construction materials cannot be used except for some material finishes. The 1985 date outlined above is a “guideline only” and there is no guarantee asbestos is not being applied in a recently built structure expect for schools. On July 12, 1989 EPA issued a final rule banning most asbestos materials but in 1991 this regulation was overturned. Reference: <a href="http://www.epa.gov/asbestos/pubs/ban.html">http://www.epa.gov/asbestos/pubs/ban.html</a></p>		
<p>✓ Is there a certificate (asbestos clearance survey) that shows asbestos containing materials are not in the building after it was constructed or after it was remodeled?</p>	Yes	No
<p>✓ If yes, does the building owner agree to provide the contractor with a copy of the clearance survey report before:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The contractor investigates hidden water damage inside walls and ceilings and under flooring?</li> <li>• The contractor removes sections of water damaged building materials and finishes?</li> <li>• The contractor disturbs building materials and finishes for structural drying purposes?</li> </ul>	Yes Yes Yes	No No No
<p>✓ When an asbestos building clearance survey is not available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the building owner/manager agree to immediately hire a certified asbestos consultant to consult and work with the restoration contractor?</li> <li>• Does the building owner/manager agree to allow the water damage restoration contractor to immediately hire a certified asbestos consultant?</li> <li>• Does the building owner/manager realize the contractor <i>cannot</i> disturb building materials that potentially contain asbestos until an asbestos survey is complete?</li> </ul>	Yes Yes Yes	No No No
<p><b>Asbestos Education Note</b> – When a building owner/manager questions whether an asbestos survey is required after water damage, fire or other catastrophic event where potential friable materials can be present, the answer is yes. OSHA requires the asbestos survey to protect workers in the workplace and EPA requires it to protect building occupants and the public (References include: <a href="http://www.epa.gov/ttnatw01/hlthef/asbestos.html">http://www.epa.gov/ttnatw01/hlthef/asbestos.html</a> and <a href="http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/asbestos">http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/asbestos</a> )</p>		
<b>Environmental Survey for Residential/Commercial Buildings Constructed Before 1978</b>		
<p><b>Lead-based Paint</b> – EPA banned lead-base paint in homes and apartments in 1978. However, lead-based paint may have been used in some commercial buildings after 1978. Reference: <a href="http://www.cicacenter.org/leadnew.cfm">http://www.cicacenter.org/leadnew.cfm</a>; <a href="http://www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/leadinfo.htm">http://www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/leadinfo.htm</a> ; and <a href="http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G1-19572529.html">http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G1-19572529.html</a></p>		
<p>✓ Is there a certificate (lead paint clearance survey) that shows lead-based paint is not in the building after it was constructed or after it was remodeled?</p>	Yes	No
<p>✓ If yes, does the building owner agree to provide the contractor with a copy of the clearance survey report before:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The contractor investigates hidden water damage inside painted walls, ceilings and windows?</li> <li>• The contractor removes sections of painted water damaged building materials and finishes?</li> <li>• The contractor disturbs painted finishes for structural drying purposes?</li> </ul>	Yes Yes Yes	No No No
<p>✓ When a lead-based paint building clearance survey is not available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the building owner/manager agree to immediately hire an accredited lead-based paint inspector to consult and work with the restoration contractor?</li> <li>• Does the building owner/manager agree to allow the water damage restoration contractor to immediately hire an accredited lead-based paint inspector?</li> <li>• Does the building owner/manager realize the contractor <i>cannot</i> disturb building materials that potentially contain lead paint until a lead-based paint survey is complete?</li> </ul>	Yes Yes Yes	No No No
<p><b>Lead-based Paint Education Note</b> – When a building owner/manager questions whether a lead-based paint survey is required after water damage, fire or other catastrophic event where lead paint particles can be present, the answer is yes. OSHA requires a lead-based paint survey to protect workers in the workplace and EPA requires it to protect building occupants and the public (References include: <a href="http://www.epa.gov/lead">http://www.epa.gov/lead</a>; <a href="http://www.epa.gov/lead/new.htm#aug2009">http://www.epa.gov/lead/new.htm#aug2009</a>; <a href="http://www2a.cdc.gov/podcasts/player.asp?f=10121">http://www2a.cdc.gov/podcasts/player.asp?f=10121</a> and <a href="http://lead-info.com/abatementguidelinesexamp.html">http://lead-info.com/abatementguidelinesexamp.html</a></p>		

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## Contractor's Initial Emergency Response Survey Form

During the exterior and interior building walkthrough identify and document the condition the building in both wet and dry rooms: (1) Free of visible damage; (2) some materials have water staining; (3) some materials are swollen; (4) some materials have signs of visible water damage; (5) some materials need repair; (6) some materials have mold growth on them; (7) some materials are excessively dirty; (8) musty odors are indoors; (9) digital pictures were taken showing the material's condition.

(10) Add a new description: \_\_\_\_\_.

<b>Customer:</b>						
<b>Address:</b>						
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>			<b>Project Supervisor:</b>			
<b>Purpose for Inspection:</b>						
<b>Visible Water Damaged Rooms include:</b>						
<b>Exterior Appearance:</b>	Excellent Condition		Average Condition		Requires Maintenance	
Landscape						
Roofing						
Siding						
Windows and Doors						
General Maintenance						
Other:						
Other:						
<b>Interior Appearance: (Name Each Room)</b>	Walls	Floors	Ceilings	Cabinets	Contents	Other
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						
7.						
8.						
9.						
10.						
11.						
12.						