

# DISASTER BASIC GUIDELINES

## WHAT YOU CAN DO WHEN DISASTER STRIKES



### THIS IS A DISASTER - WHAT NOW?

There are simple steps that can be taken to limit the damage to your business or property.



### BASIC GUIDELINES

The basic actions you take may depend on different factors (cause and condition) but there are some general rules that can be applied to almost all types of damage:

- Life safety issues should always be addressed first.
- Shore up, secure and/or evacuate all areas in danger of collapse.
- Secure the scene to prevent unauthorized entry.
- Install protection barriers or secondary containment systems to prevent pollutants from flowing into drains or absorbing into the soil.
- Switch off all equipment immediately. Do not reconnect them, even for test purposes, until it is safe.
- Shut down all systems - power, water, gas, compressed air supply and air conditioning. Do not reconnect them until it is safe.
- Document damage with photographs and written records.
- Notify your insurance company.

### WATER DAMAGE

- Extract water to stop damage which cannot be reversed such as swelling and discoloration.
- Remove soaked objects such as furniture, curtains, carpet, floor coverings and more.
- Apply corrosion prevention agents to protect and preserve equipment, electronics and machinery.
- Demolition or special drying efforts may be essential if walls, floors and ceilings are very wet or totally saturated.
- Reduce the relative humidity to less than 40% as quickly as possible to slow corrosion and discourage mold growth.
- Raise furniture and insert plastic wedges or styrofoam blocks underneath to prevent moisture wicking up from below.
- Begin drying as soon as possible with desiccant or refrigerant dehumidifiers. Use a professional service as some items can be damaged by inappropriate drying techniques.
- Pack books and documents in a cardboard box lined with a plastic trash bag.
- For valuable items and bound materials, use a wax paper sling to prevent color transfer.
- Freeze any wet books or documents as quickly as possible. A refrigerator freezer or upright/chest freezer is acceptable.
- Maintain a good inventory of wet materials.



### FIRE DAMAGE

- Allow smoke to escape by opening vents, windows and doors. Turn on or install fans as needed.
- Organize a fire watch in your community and review emergency plans regularly.
- Cover electronics, machines and equipment with plastic sheeting as long as extinguishing water is flowing or dripping.
- Pump out or extract residual extinguishing water into tanks for temporary storage.



- Remove soaked objects such as furniture, curtains, carpets, floor covering and more.
- Disconnect electrical supply to equipment and disconnect back-up batteries.
- Place electronic devices, machines, stock and inventory in dry storage.
- To minimize further corrosion, try to keep the relative humidity at less than 40% in the room or inside plastic sheeting tents erected to protect valuable items. Blow in dry air or set up an air dehumidifier.
- Apply corrosion prevention agents to machinery and technical equipment.
- Safeguard unaffected areas. Isolate fire contaminated areas to prevent cross-contamination.

### DUST DAMAGE

- Switch off and do not operate equipment or electronic devices if possible.
- If damage is caused by a Type ABC powder extinguishing agent, attempt to maintain humidity levels below 40% to minimize corrosion.