**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, 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.