

Containment and Why It Is So Important

The ANSI/IICRC S500 states containment is “an engineering control designed to isolate an area for drying or used to minimize cross contamination from affected to unaffected areas by traffic or material handling. Containment is often used in conjunction with managed airflow (e.g., negative air pressure).”

Every drying project should be contained to not only focus the drying on the smallest area possible to make the drying more effective, but also to separate the affected area from the unaffected to minimize potential cross-contamination, heat, temperature, or noise. Setting containment could be as simple as closing a door or constructing plastic with extension poles. Remember, use sand bags, if possible, instead of tape when it is a category 1 or 2 and there are no big health concerns to hold down the edges of the plastic. Tape has a very limited warranty and can pull off finishes or leave residues so restorers need to be careful before using.

It is critical that when you go over the job scope/drying plan with the lead technician that you discuss the use of containment. See some suggested questions below to assist in making sure the strategy includes focusing the drying on the smallest area possible and not spreading contaminants.

Recommended Questions

- 1 Ask the lead technician or project manager how they are setting containment when discussing the drying chambers. Don't give them a choice; assume it is being set, and you just need to record how it is being placed, adding you need photos of the containment. They can take the photos of it when they take the photos of their equipment setup. It is critical we obtain these photos by the second day of drying. You must set that expectation from the very beginning.
- 2 If there are vaulted ceilings or open floor plans that make setting containment difficult, it is still important they contain the affected area, because if they don't, it will dramatically slow down the drying. Restoration supply houses sell plenty of containment options with ziplock doors, extension poles, etc.

- 3 If it is a category 3 with mold, lead, or asbestos contaminated water loss, it is even more important containment be used to prevent the spread. We may even need them to prove they have the affected area under negative pressure by taking photos of manometer readings. Negative pressure of 0.02" w.g. (5 pascals) is normally considered adequate to prevent the spread of contaminants.
- 4 When drying wood flooring, there are other category 4 situations, or when the drying is not progressing properly, containment can greatly shorten the drying time by raising the wet surface temperatures. Wet surface temperatures combined with the gpp in the affected areas should be recorded to show the restorer achieved good evaporation potential.

Conclusion

It is amazing in today's water mitigation industry how many materials can be saved and dried quickly by utilizing the science of drying and new drying technology. The problem we see in the industry is many technicians don't take the time to focus their drying by setting good containment. Remember, the drying process creates lots of wind noise, heat, and possible spread of contaminants or dust, and the affected areas must be separated from the unaffected. That is why we always ask for readings in both areas to ensure the unaffected areas remain protected and the affected areas have good conditions for drying.



MEET ED

Instructor Ed Jones has more than 30 years of experience in the industry, has the title of Master Water Restorer, is an Institute of Inspection Cleaning and Restoration Certification (IICRC)–approved instructor, and has served on the S500–2021 consensus body committee to develop the most recent standard.



Happy Drying! Ed

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