With New Drying Technology, Why Do We Still See So Much Demolition?

After over 40 years in this industry, I am amazed at how much demolition still occurs on a normal everyday residential water loss. I've been an IICRC approved instructor in WRT & ASD for over 15 years and have been preaching about drying materials in-place vs. remove and replace in all my classes. We flood our IICRC approved ASD flood house, called the Disaster Recovery Learning Lab or DRLL located on the Clark State campus in Springfield, OH, with over 1500 gallons of water 10 months a year for the last 15 years. Then 24-36 hours after flooding we start the ASD class and teach the students we don't have to tear all the wet stuff out and that by utilizing the science of drying on a category 1 water loss, including proper extraction techniques, proper placement of air movers and dehumidifiers, and proper use of temperature control, that we can dry carpet, carpet pad, drywall, wood framing, and wood subfloors within 3-4 days and in 5-7 days we can save hardwood & engineered wood flooring. Even on category 2 water losses we can save carpet & drywall. We do take off one baseboard on an exterior wall in the bedroom that has vinyl wallpaper on it to show how to dry behind a vapor barrier, as well as remove the toe kick to the kitchen base cabinet to dry under it, but that is the only materials removed! Everything else we dry in place very quickly.

So, if IICRC approved ASD courses are teaching it is possible to dry many materials in place, why don't we see more drying of materials and still see so much unnecessary demolition?

See my top 6 reasons below that I think are the main reasons we still see so much demo:

1 **Training** - it's much easier to hire someone and teach them to perform 2' flood cuts and to pull wet carpet and pad then it is to teach them how to dry materials in place and understand the science of drying, including vapor pressure differentials. *FYI - to try to keep Restorative Drying Simple I've coined the term, "Heat it Up, To Speed it Up!" for that is all vapor pressure differential is -* ***raise the surface temperatures of the wet materials to raise their vapor pressure while lowering the water vapor in the air next to the material with dehumidification which lowers the vapor pressure of the air next to the material (high pressure goes to low pressure on this planet), thus a good vapor pressure differential between material and air or quick drying!*** We must drive the work to those that are well-trained and have the proper certifications and equipment, including the ASD certification where they are taught to **"Restore vs. Remove & Replace**." Minimizing unnecessary demolition will save the industry millions of

dollars, which in turn will keep homeowners' insurance premiums down. **Insurance adjusters and restorers both need to be properly educated to improve outcomes and minimize issues.**

2 **Expectations** - not enough adjusters and third-party vendor programs monitor the amount of demolition, especially when it comes to drywall flood cuts and removal of carpet pad. Most adjusters believe wet drywall, at least drywall that is installed on exterior walls, and carpet pad, should always be removed when wet, regardless of the category of water. To be clear, the ANSI/IICRC S500-2021 states in the **Appendix A that carpet and drywall are generally restorable when affected with categories 1 & 2 water** but should be removed when affected with category 3 water. We need to get more adjusters and third-party administrators trained and certified in Applied Structural Drying (ASD) so we can raise the bar of expectations. At our flood house we routinely dry the carpet in 12 hours, the carpet pad in 36 hours (without placing any air movement under the carpet or pad), and the drywall in 48-72 hours (without taking off baseboards or opening up the walls). Sill plates and wood subfloors dry in 3-4 days!

3 **Category of Water** - too many times the technician pulls the trigger on category 2 or 3 when water that originated from a water supply line ran through a ceiling or wall cavity. This would NOT reflect "significant contamination" that would be classified as category 2 and even if it is category 2, the carpet and drywall can still be saved per Appendix A in the S500 Standard. There are 7 factors to consider when determining the category of water and it is a critical thinking exercise. **See Getting EDucated by Ed Jones article - 7 Factors to Consider When Determining Category of Water*

4 **Habit** - I actually think most technicians have gotten into a **habit of demolition** and because no one pushes back it is the easiest option that doesn't require drying knowledge, certifications, or drying equipment. If they only knew that demolition is much less profitable than drying materials in place due to the cost of labor to demo & extra cleaning, labor tax burden, and workers comp, and that's not even considering the headaches the insured will get when they experience delays and workmanship issues during reconstruction. **Demolition = Mess, too many times!**

5 **Conflict of Interest between Mitigation vs. Reconstruction** - The "one-stop-shop" model of using the same contractor to mitigate and to perform reconstruction actually incentives them to tear out more materials so they can get paid to install new materials.

6 **Liability** - Some contractors would rather remove as many wet materials as possible to minimize the risk of someone alleging, they didn't dry properly and caused mold. I explain to them that if they only followed the industry standard more closely and properly documented their drying process,

including psychrometric and moisture content records, AND a moisture map sketch that clearly shows where they took their moisture content readings along with photos of their final readings they wouldn't have as much liability from drying materials in place. The ANSI/IICRC S500-2021 states, "Restorers should maintain organized logs to monitor progress and demonstrate the effectiveness of the drying process." Some items that can be included are:

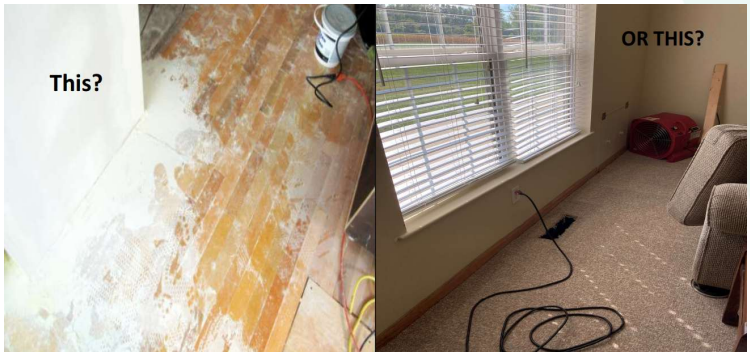
■ the name of the project;
■ the dates and times of service; the person performing the service;
■ the instrumentation used;
■ the appropriate psychrometric readings (e.g., temperature, RH) in affected areas, unaffected areas and inlets/outlets of dehumidifiers or HVAC systems, if present;
■ moisture level or content measurements of representative materials in the affected and unaffected areas;
■ **drying goals and standards for the affected materials; and location of the moisture level or content readings.**

In Summary, the ANSI/IICRC S500-2021 doesn't use the term "contractors" to describe the vendor, it uses the term "restorers." That alone should be an indicator that **all vendors should have a mindset of Restore vs. Remove & Replace.** If we focus more on drying and less on demolition several things will happen:

1) Policyholders will get their lives back to normal more quickly with less problems and headaches.

2) Adjusters will close their files more quickly with less escalations and lower severity.

3) And restorers will make more money from equipment rental and having less labor costs due to minimizing amount of demolition. Plus, the satisfaction of helping someone out in their time of need in a quick and efficient manner, that is more cost effective and keeps insurances costs down.



https://www.accuserve.com/flood-house-training#courses to learn more!

Happy Drying! Ed

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.

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