

7 Factors to Consider When Determining Category of Water

1 Confirm source of loss and where it was located – chamber/level/room – obtain close-up photos of origin of loss showing failed parts, if possible, as well as an overview of the source room, from a couple of different angles to help identify potential long-term damage. Did water start out category 1, 2 or 3?

2 Time is a factor! Confirm date of loss vs. date of discovery with technician and homeowner, if needed. Certain sources of water damage are likely to have been wet longer than thought, e.g., ice maker line, A/C condensation line, shower pan, toilet seal, under kitchen sink or behind dishwasher or clothes washer, hot water heater, etc. **There is no timeline given in the S500 on how long it takes to go from category 1 to category 2 or category 2 to 3! It is a judgement call, and we need to be part of validating that judgement!**

3 Odors? Musty/Moldy, Sour, Pet Urine, etc. – Can be an indicator of hidden water damage. May need to perform “Selective Invasive Investigation” to look for potential microbial growth.

4 Building History – signs of previous moisture issues not related to this water loss? Dark staining of tack strip or baseboard, pre-existing mold, deterioration of materials?

5 Visible Mold – Identify if pre-existing or related to this water loss? Obtain photos of where located and how much there is. **MUST** have photos and SF or visible mold! Escalation!

6 Conditions in the structure – Extremely clean? Normal clean? Clean, but messy? Messy & dirty? Filthy – contaminated – evidence of microbial growth, urine, feces, microorganism risk? ***Water moving under a wall or through a ceiling cavity or through insulation doesn’t automatically deteriorate the category of water! Need signs of microorganism risk!**

7 Temperature in the affected areas – very warm and humid? Cooler the temperatures in the structure it can slow down the growth of mold.

Determining the category of water is a critical thinking exercise, and you MUST have a conversation with the technician to confirm for it will determine safety precautions and how much demolition will occur!

Happy Drying! Ed

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MEET ED

Instructor Ed Jones has over 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.

