

When is Stabilization Needed On a Water Loss When There is Delay?

Sometimes when there are coverage issues (potential mold/long-term damage) or asbestos or mold testing needed prior to authorization of demolition there may be a delay in mitigation, and the mitigation restorer is unable to use air movers. The ANSI/IICRC S500-2021 states “Humidity and temperatures within the structure should be controlled as soon as practical to minimize moisture migration, potential secondary damage, and microbial amplification.

See tips below to consider when authorizing dehumidifiers and air filtration devices (AFDs) before restorative drying actually begins:

1 What is the relative humidity in the affected areas? At or above 70% RH is an indoor environment where mold growth or secondary damage could occur. Need to get indoor environment below 70%!

2 What is the relative humidity in the unaffected areas? Is the humidity levels from the affected area affecting the unaffected areas? Can we set containment to keep that from happening?

3 What is the relative humidity outside? Outside conditions can dramatically impact our indoor drying, so if the humidity outside is at or above 70% or humidity ratio (gpp) at or above 70 gpp? Air pressure outside with high humidity levels can force their way inside and raise the current humidity levels.

4 HVAC working and help us maintain inside humidity levels? If warm and humid, can we get the A/C running to assist? Take HVAC readings to judge if we have a good grain depression between inside affected areas vs. what is coming out of the HVAC supply vents.

5 What is wet? Lots of saturated carpet, pad and drywall, the most common porous materials we find wet in residential situations, can release moisture quickly into the inside air which can raise inside humidity levels. Might need to check temp and RH DAILY until restorative drying can be initiated. Standing water in the structure? Can it be vacuumed/extracted?

6 Can we use site assets to assist with controlling inside humidity? Bathroom exhaust fans, stove vent hood exhaust fans, ceiling fans, opening windows and setting a fan to help vent the inside air to outside, IF outside gpp less than inside gpp.

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- 7 **Any hygroscopic materials**, like paintings, books, or porous wall hangings at risk in the affected areas?
- 8 **Any visible mold that needs to be contained?** Need photos to validate how much and where.
- 9 **Anyone staying in the damaged structure that has health issues** that might be at risk due to potential contaminants? Can fallen potential ACM or mold be covered and contained?
- 10 **Any hazardous conditions that need to be addressed?** Falling construction, electrical, contents standing in water that need moved or blocked or tabbed, visible mold, etc.

This is a situational thinking exercise that requires asking a series of questions of the restorer onsite and then huddling with the assigned adjuster to make a professional recommendation. **Don't forget, depending on how long the delay will be, it is important to check regularly to see if the humidity levels increase.**

Happy Drying! Ed

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.

