

Water Damage Mitigation

Critical Thinking = Accountability

In my role as a subject matter expert in water damage restoration and mold, I am asked technical questions everyday about different water damage/mold topics. The most common answer I give is, “It Depends.”

What I mean is that every technical answer I give is dependent upon many variables so I typically have to ask several clarifying questions to lead me to the correct answer so I can make my professional recommendation based on the specifics of those circumstances.

In today’s property insurance claims world, we are all dealing with a daily barrage of claims, emails, and phone calls with each of us juggling large workloads and deadlines, so we are all under pressure to move quickly to resolve issues and close claims. Because of this **we are always looking for ways to have AI and mobile apps do a large part of the work for us.** Add to this the fact that generally we all like to keep things simple and have answers that are either black or white. Unfortunately, we live in a world of grey, where if you change one variable it can completely change your answer! I love mobile apps for the ease of transfer of large amounts of information, but I have learned that some of the most used mobile apps in water damage restoration can be manipulated based on the algorithms used.

For example, water damage mitigation mobile apps have the industry standard formula for the amount of airmovers to place in an affected room on a drying project built into the app based on information entered by the user. **Unfortunately, it is the old adage, “Garbage In, Garbage Out”,** if the user doesn’t enter in accurate data so the algorithm works properly, they will get the wrong answer. In one case I actually called the mobile app company and asked one of their technical advisors why when I check the amount of airmovers charged for on a water loss drying project in one affected room I got 3-4 airmovers for that room, whereas their app recommended 5-6 airmovers? After giving him the claim # he checked on it and came back and explained that there were 2 offsets or insets listed for that room that added 2 additional airmovers. I checked the photos of that room and the sketch and told him that room didn’t have any offsets or insets, so does that mean the user of the app can enter in false information and raise the number of airmovers they get to charge for??? I discovered the app doesn’t check for offsets or insets in a room by checking photos or sketches, and in the case of the formula for dehumidifiers where the dehumidifiers recommended depends on the class of water, the user gets to choose the class of water when they enter in the information, as well as the dimensions. **Point is that if we are relying on mobile apps to tell us the right amount of drying equipment was used, then the app recommendation is completely dependent on the information entered by the user and can be manipulated!**

What this means is that YOU must use your critical thinking skills to validate what was billed for based on your knowledge of the industry standard. Yes, the mobile app can help us obtain the information we need to validate amount of equipment used, length of drying time, etc., but you have to double check to

make sure the user didn't enter in false information that then manipulated the app, so it gave the wrong recommendation.



VS.



See some tips below for a methodical way to “critically think” your way to the right answer:

- 1. Clarify your thinking purpose and context.** We live in a world oversaturated with information of varying quality and relevance. To be an effective critical thinker, you need to focus on your own purpose and context and critically think your way to the right answer.
- 2. Question your sources.** Not all sources of information are equally credible, accurate or relevant. Questioning your sources will sharpen your thinking, help you select the most appropriate information and prepare the ground for further analysis and evaluation.
- 3. Smell Test** – if something doesn't “smell right” it probably isn't right. Be inquisitive and ask questions when you think something doesn't look right. With length of drying time, you must know the key performance indicators to look for when reviewing the drying logs to validate it properly.
- 4. Analyze sources and arguments.** To analyze something means to examine it in detail, explain and interpret it. Work the problem yourself using industry standard formulas as a double-check to make sure the mobile app is working the way it should.

In summary, you have “real” intelligence, nothing “artificial” about it! **Use your critical thinking skills and you will be in high demand!** Also, remember to always be respectful & professional as we question others!

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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