

10 DO'S AND DON'TS FOR Dealing With Fire-Related Water Damage



DO: Familiarize yourself with your organization's emergency response plan and building layouts.



DON'T: Assume emergencies are someone else's responsibility.

All employees and contractors must prepare for fire or water emergencies.

DO: Use bold and clear signage to identify fire protection equipment rooms.

DON'T: Take for granted that the fire department knows where to find your fire protection system.



During an emergency, time is of the essence. Well-placed signage helps emergency crews take immediate action.

DO: Verify that your building's sprinkler system is "supervised" or has flow monitors that trigger an alarm when they detect water flow.

DON'T: Close your building's sprinkler system water supply valve without consulting local fire officials on a safe procedure.

Closing water supply valves connected to your sprinkler system will render part or all of the system inoperative. When valves are closed, your local fire code may require that personnel patrol the building on the lookout for fires.



DO: Regularly inspect sprinkler systems as outlined by the manufacturer, National Fire Protection Association requirements, and local regulations.



DON'T: Assume someone else in your organization is taking care of maintenance and inspections.

Be proactive. If an internal equipment inspection process doesn't exist, work with your organization to create one.

DO: Install sprinkler protection guards to prevent damage and accidental discharges.

DON'T: Install guards without consulting applicable National Fire Protection Association requirements and local regulations.



An improperly installed sprinkler guard may prevent a sprinkler from working during an emergency.

DO: Enlist the help of a qualified staff member, contractor, or local fire official to place sprinkler systems offline for maintenance.

DON'T: Attempt to fix a broken sprinkler or service a fire protection system if you are not qualified to do so.



When in doubt, ask local fire, health, or building officials for assistance.

DO: Store keys to your sprinkler system room on-premise in a key vault, preferably in a location recommended by the fire department.

DON'T: Leave keys unsecured or with an employee.



Misplacing keys or leaving them with an off-site employee will delay emergency crews and increase damage.

DO: Consult with local fire, building, and health officials before reoccupying a building after a fire emergency or sprinkler discharge.

DON'T: Immediately enter or allow residents to reoccupy a building after an emergency or accidental sprinkler discharge, as conditions may be unsafe.



Just because an emergency appears over doesn't mean it's safe for you or residents to enter the affected building.

DO: Include a remediation specialist in your organization's emergency plan. Consult with this specialist as soon as possible after a water or fire emergency to remove unsalvageable items, assess the damage, and begin remediation.



DON'T: Put off dealing with water or fire damage.

Health risks associated with fire and water damage include, but aren't limited to mold, unsanitary water, lead dust, asbestos, and electrical shock.

DO: Have a building's electrical system inspected by local officials before using power outlets and appliances, including fans, vacuums, and dehumidifiers.

DON'T: Attempt to use a building's power sources immediately after a fire or water emergency, as an electrical shock is a severe and potentially deadly hazard.



If a building's electrical system is deemed unsafe, portable generators can provide power for remediation efforts.

Contact our Risk Control Services Team

for more resources and answers to your housing organization's risk-related questions.

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