



Engaging Water Mitigation Companies

The winter storm of February 2021, which caused water damage to property for many of our members, highlighted the need to have a plan of action in place when it comes to hiring a water mitigation company. The sheer scope and breadth of that storm, which impacted the entire state of Texas, created unprecedented problems. Namely, the difficulty in finding available contractors due to the high demand for their services. Hopefully, that was a once in a lifetime event. Barring a statewide catastrophic event, it pays to know your water mitigation contractor before disaster strikes.

Here are some things to consider when selecting your service provider for water restoration needs.

Is your water mitigation company IICRC certified?

In Texas, there is no licensing requirement for water mitigation companies. Due to the lack of licensing requirement, companies can “pop-up” over-night in a disaster situation. However, finding a certified contractor provides peace of mind that you are dealing with a reputable company that is qualified and has properly trained personnel working on your site. The Institute of Inspection, Cleaning, and Restoration Certification is a non-profit organization that offers 26 different certifications across the Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Industries. They have provided certification to almost 50,000 Technicians and 6,500 Firms across the globe. A company that wishes to be IICRC certified must go through a rigorous application process and meet certain standards to ensure they’re both trustworthy and reliable. Some of the well-known names in the industry, Blackmon Mooring, Service Master and Serve Pro are IICRC certified, to name a few. IICRC certified companies are required to abide by the IICRC Code of Ethics and provide ongoing education and training leading to certification of all their technicians.

Do they offer 24/7 emergency services?

Unfortunately, water damage does not only occur during normal business hours. Minutes and hours saved on beginning the mitigation process can save thousands of dollars.

Vet your provider of choice beforehand.

Research the company ahead of time so that you feel comfortable when it comes time to sign a work agreement with them. Do your due diligence and check client testimonials. Past performance is a good indicator of future performance. Ask about their equipment. Is it specialized equipment with the right handling methodologies? Ask about the training of their team members and whether they are employees or independent contractors hired for the job.

Other things to consider

1. Ask About Their Documentation Procedures

Proper documentation of the work done and by whom is vital to properly submitting an invoice for payment. There should be Drying Logs, documentation of all damaged

contents that are thrown out and detailed lists of pack-out/pack-in of contents that are salvageable and removed from the premises for cleaning and return later. The condition of any contents that are removed from the location should be documented thoroughly to ensure that they are returned in the same condition.

2. Do not pay an invoice until it has been reviewed

Please forward all invoices to the Fund adjuster assigned to the claim for review. During the freeze related claims of last year, many contractors submitted invoices that appeared to be exorbitant. The Fund forwards these bills to a vendor who specializes in auditing water extraction invoices to ensure usual and customary charges and to ensure all charges are properly supported. Reputable companies know their bills will be audited and are ready to provide any requested support for charges that are questioned.

3. Make sure key people have contact information

Provide vendor contact information to all key personnel for use in the event of an emergency.

4. Know where cut-off valves are located

Provide training to staff on the location of water cut-off valves and how to turn them off in the event of an emergency.