

What Do I Do If a Leak Occurs?

Handout 3

Whether or not the water damage may be covered by your insurance policy, it is important to act quickly to prevent further damage to your home.

- Immediately stop the source of leak or flooding.
- Remove excess water with mops or a wet vacuum. If the damage is significant, consider contacting a water extraction company for immediate action.
- Whenever possible, move wet items to a secure, dry and well-ventilated area or outside to expedite drying.
- Protect repairable and undamaged items from further damage.
- Move rugs and pull up areas of wet carpet as soon as possible.
- Increase circulation in and around wet areas by opening closet and cabinet doors, moving furniture away from walls and running fans.
- If necessary, remove wallboard and flooring materials to dry out those areas.
- Don't throw away removed or damaged materials until instructed by your insurance company.
- Dry any damp or wet building materials and furnishings within 24 to 48 hours.
- Keep all receipts, photos and other relevant documents.
- Contact your insurance company, if applicable.

NOTE: The sooner the affected areas dry out and the source of the leak is repaired, the better your chances of minimizing damage to your property. If the water cannot be removed and the area dried promptly and efficiently, consider contacting a water extraction company for immediate action.

Prepared by Russ Kennedy, Ph.D., M.B.A., M.P.H., CHES, CSCS, Assistant Professor - Health and Aging Specialist, University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service, rkennedy@uaex.edu.