



The Toilet has overflowed. Do I need to involve a Professional Drying Company?

In order to intelligently answer this question, you must first answer several others. **Important factors are:**

1. **The value of the Wet Components**
2. **The extent of water migration, your available time including its value, & your available equipment**
3. **Elapsed time since the water event**
4. **The type of water (sewer vs. clean)**
5. **Your obligation for disclosure**

(1) Value of the Wet Components:

If the carpet is 10 years old and the walls are not affected; it may be a good time to simply trash the old carpet and apply the money you would have spent drying to the new floor covering. Conversely, as little as a gallon of water on your new hardwoods could cause irreversible damage if not professionally addressed.

Valuable or new carpet, marble, ceramic tile, and wood are all vulnerable to damage by water. The stones and ceramics, depending on composition, often expand very slightly at each wet tile and given several tiles, the expansion creates severe pressures that cause the less adhered portions of the floor to dislodge. **Long runs of tile can actually buckle much like a wood floor can.** This is exacerbated by the fact that many ceramic tile installations are incorrectly grouted against the base which allows for no expansion, in fact the sole plate and base itself is swelling against it. Marble tiles often warp slightly when subjected to water for extended periods. Most of these stone and ceramic installations are applied in thin set with a notched trowel. These notches provide channels for the water that can place water across an entire room without breaching the surface.

Ceramic tile and stone floors are particularly troublesome because often the responsible party thinks they have cleaned up the water only to find mold at the baseplates days later. This is usually due to water trapped in the grooved channels under the tile. A large room could hold several gallons of water under the tiles and slowly release it to the edges as it dries. This provides ample moisture for mold growth at the sole and base plates. Mold is also found under tiles after water events but it is usually due to organic matter being unintentionally mixed with the thin set or already on the floor when the tile is set. **Tile on wood subfloors regularly produces mold problems if not aggressively dried.**

Obviously, the value of these types of floors would warrant professional inspection at a minimum. **Always remember a free inspection after your water loss is simply a phone call away.** No person can determine the water has not wicked into the walls or under floors without specialized equipment.

(2) Extent of the Water Migration:

Although dozens of variables exist, you can usually distinguish the tiny spills from those that pose larger problems. **A gallon of water in the center of a room is usually something a shop vac, fan, and bit of elbow grease can remedy without professional help. It is when this water is either poorly extracted or migrates to a wall or cabinet that the potential for costly damage becomes elevated. Walls and cabinets are areas we never recommend the property owner dry on their own.** It is here that the potential for mold growth is the greatest. The area between the base trim and the drywall as well as the area between the frame bottom plate and the drywall are common areas of slow drying which allows for mold colonization. **Cabinets with solid backs and non-vented bottoms are common problem areas, even for professionals.**

Mold: The cost of professional drying is minimal compared to the cost of mold remediation. Couple that with disclosure and resale issues, and the potential losses above the cost of professional drying become exponential.

(3) Elapsed Time:

Time is the enemy. Modern drying methods allow most flooring and building components to be dried in-place with minimal to no demolition provided the water was not contaminated and the drying company responds immediately. **The chances of successful drying without demolition decrease significantly with time.**

In most cases, the old way of tearing out the carpet and pad have given way to new technologies utilized in high powered extraction equipment, efficient fans, high efficiency dehumidifiers, and cavity drying systems that replace the air within the walls and floors with dry air to facilitate rapid evaporation.

(4) Contaminated Water:

It is seldom recommended for a homeowner to attempt decontamination of flood, sewer, or other significantly contaminated water without professional help. Its not to say a homeowner can't do it, but the risk of microbial contamination and harmful human contact are much higher than that of clean water mishaps.

See section on water categories for more information on water contamination.

(5)Disclosure Obligations:

Lets be realistic--We live in a litigious society and not every person holds themselves to a higher moral obligation. Regardless of your motivation, you may feel the obligation to fully disclose your water event(s) during the sale of your property. You can appreciate the comfort a potential buyer will have when you tell them the water was professionally extracted and dried. **Additionally, 877QuicDry (877-784-2379), upon request, provides low cost and no cost mold testing at the closure of all full-service drying projects.**