

Ten Tips For Drying Your Church

How to respond to a water emergency

If your church building has pipes or your region gets rain, you'll eventually experience a water problem. Knowing what to do and who to call in an emergency can help you reduce the damage. Here's what to do.

1. **STOP the water!** When you find a leaking or burst pipe inside the building, turn off the water. It sounds simple, but many people don't know where to find water shutoff valves in an emergency, says Jeffrey Kloss, project and marketing manager for Nivek Services Inc., a catastrophe recovery company based in Atlanta. If a leaking roof is your foe, catch rainwater in large buckets and cover the damaged area with a tarp as soon as possible.
2. **Remove furniture.** Remove furniture from the affected area, if possible. This protects it from further damage and makes it easier to vacuum out water.
3. **Get items off the floor.** Pick up any printed materials, so they don't stain the carpet. To keep wood stain or rust from transferring to the flooring, place a barrier between any remaining furniture and the floor. You can use a variety of items, including wood blocks, Styrofoam, aluminum foil, plastic wrap—even pots, pans, and dishes.
4. **Relocate electronics.** Elevated humidity can cause problems with computers, sound equipment, and other electronics. Unplug any items in a water-damaged area, and don't try to power up anything that's gotten wet until a qualified electrician or electronics repair person has inspected it.
5. **Suck it up.** The sooner you remove water, the less of it can soak into walls and cause secondary damage. Use a pump or wet/dry vacuum to remove excess water.
6. **Turn on the fans.** Move air through the affected area as soon as possible. Bring in dehumidifiers and turn on your building's air conditioner, even in winter. If you can't get a water damage restoration company to respond immediately, rent special carpet-drying fans to blow across the carpet and floors.
7. **Don't remove carpet immediately.** If the carpet has been wet less than 48 hours and sewage isn't involved, a water damage remediation company can often salvage the carpet. If carpeting has been contaminated by sewage water or cannot be dried within 48 hours, have a professional determine whether the carpet can be saved.
8. **Document the damage.** Take photographs or video of the damage to share with your insurance agent.
9. **Call your insurance agent.** Contact your agent promptly to report the damage. Your agent may be able to recommend qualified plumbers or water damage restoration companies in your area.
10. **Hire an expert.** A water damage restoration professional will have the training, tools, and experience to return your building back to normal quickly. Even if a problem is small enough to handle in-house, it's wise to have a professional check your work. Excess moisture in the air can seep into ceiling tiles, walls, floors, and other places that you can't see. Confirming that the area

is back to normal gives you the assurance that no secondary problems will develop over time. A quality restoration contractor should be willing to provide moisture inspection for little or no cost.



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