

A MESSAGE FROM
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President*

WATER DAMAGE PART II: MOISTURE SENSING EQUIPMENT

Tools of the Water Remediation Trade

The March edition of the Leader outlined a case study of a burst pipe in a bank branch in Milton. At the bottom of page one, we asked three questions.

1. Identify the Category of loss.

The water originated from a supply line leading us to consider the loss to be a Category 1. Under this assumption it is possible to dry all the components in place. Left untreated, however, the loss will progress to a Category 2 within 24-hours and Category 3 within 48-hours. In our case, the technicians responded within two hours and began the drying process.

2. How many classes of water were present?

There were two classes of water present on this loss. A Class 2 loss was found in the wet drywall (2 feet up the walls) and the carpet. These building materials are considered porous and although they absorb moisture quickly, they also release moisture rapidly and will be dry before other less absorbent materials. Below the carpet is concrete and wet concrete is considered a Class 1 loss. The technician accommodated the drying needs of both Classes of water to completely dry the building.

3. Which building materials would take the longest to dry?

The cabinetry followed by the concrete flooring would take the longest to dry, as they are denser and will hold moisture longer.

The assumptions made above come from proper education and the use of moisture sensing equipment. The tools available to technicians now include everything from an invasive probe to an infrared camera. A well equipped technician may carry over \$15,000 dollars worth in tools.

Continued on page 2



In the March Leader we learned that the drying process in a sense is straightforward. Given some sunlight, a clothesline, some time and you've got a basket full of dry, clean laundry. Too bad we can't take this simple theory inside someone's basement. We learned that restorers use some very specific terminology to help them understand the corrective measures required to get a building dry.



The choice of drying equipment and available expert advice on how to dry is endless. With new discoveries each year, the trick becomes choosing the correct equipment matched with the right technique for each particular

drying job. It is, therefore, important that the drying technician fully understand the principles behind the drying process as well as the limitations of the equipment.

The technician's understanding is only the first step. Without the right diagnostic tools a correct path cannot be determined. This Leader takes us beyond the world of Sherlock Holmes and moves us into the realm of CSI. We are going to explore the tools of the water remediation trade.

Our next Leader will continue discussions about equipment used for the drying process including the Water Out system.



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Water Damage Moisture Sensing Tools of the Water

Our most basic tool, the moisture probe, is considered an invasive tool with two sharp prongs that are pushed into materials. Water being an excellent conductor of electricity completes an internal electronic circuit, causing the tool to beep. The moisture probe is commonly used to determine the extent of water damage in carpet. This process does not damage the carpet as the prongs pass through the holes in the carpet backing into the underpad. If this tool is used on the walls they leave two punctures commonly called “snake bites” in the industry.



To inspect walls, a non-invasive moisture meter is used to determine the extent of the damage. A non-penetrating meter utilizes radio frequencies to close its circuit when damp and wet materials are found. A moisture meter goes one step further than a simple beep and provides the moisture content of the building material. To determine if a material is wet, the technician should know the usual level of moisture in dry materials and or check other dry surfaces of the same material to obtain a dry reading standard.

Most of these non-penetrating meters have optional plug-in attachments that can be used to check the moisture levels in wood floors and underlay. These are called hammer probes, aptly named because they are hammered into the grooves of a floor to determine how wet the materials are below. This does cause minor damage, which is touched up or refinished once the floor is dry.



Another tool that helps determine the extent of damaged area is an infrared camera. The camera reads surface temperatures of the material it is scanning. It is not an x-ray and cannot see through walls. There are times when a heat source or cold source is behind the surface material and the temperature is being telegraphed through to the surface. The infrared camera has the ability to visually record the damage and then confirm once it is dry. Aside from the high price, ranging from \$7,000 to \$15,000 per unit, specialized training is required to take correct readings.

Page Part II: Drying Equipment – Remediation Trade

Once the extent of the damage has been determined the technician needs to know how much moisture is in the air. For this, a digital thermo-hygrometer is used. This tool measures the relative humidity (rh) of the air, which is the amount of moisture in the air at a given temperature and is expressed as a percentage. It is the technician's job to reduce humidity levels enough to enable the building materials to dry.



Once these steps have been completed, the technician can determine the number of air movers and the amount of dehumidification required to quickly accomplish the drying process. The site will need daily monitoring and moisture, relative humidity & temperature readings recorded. Equipment removal or repositioning may be required during the process.

Ensuring a properly balanced drying system is the most efficient method of structural drying.

Our next Leader will continue discussions about water mitigation equipment, including heat drying systems.

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For the contents being cleaned, the process is streamlined keeping a full chain of custody as the contents travel from the home to the cleaning facility where they are cleaned, stored and returned.

Erratum

Please note a correction to the March 2007 Leader. On page three, below the photos, the sentence, "if a loss is a Category 1 or 2..." should have stated a Category 2 or 3.

iPod Shuffle winner: Ken Boulton (Dominion of Canada) has declined the iPod, and instead, PDS will donate \$100 in his name to the Hospital for Sick Kids.

24-HOUR NATIONAL RESPONSE CENTRE 800-661-5975

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The Leader
PDS Canada

Meet Robert and Richard Lauzon of PDS of Owen Sound

Robert and Richard Lauzon and wives Annette and Joelle are a dynamic team with extensive experience in the home renovation industry and accounting systems. They have now joined the PDS Network with the opening of PDS of Owen Sound, as a fully IICRC certified firm.

We are excited to offer the advantage of a locally owned and operated business, combined with the support of a national network. Our goal is to provide an excellent customer experience on all losses.



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DID YOU KNOW?

Benefect, a disinfectant used by all PDS offices, is safe to use around children, pets and the chemically sensitive. Find out about this environmentally responsible product from your local PDS office.

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Publication Agreement
Number 7025424

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