



# Managing Environmental Risks





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# Mold. Asbestos. Lead.

Environmental risks abound in restoration and remediation processes.

Are you doing everything you can to manage environmental risks and mitigate legal liability? For commercial property owners, commercial property managers, developers, contractors and insurers, environmental risks are a serious issue that must be managed appropriately.

This guide will outline four key areas that you should focus on to manage environmental risks during restoration and remediation services.

**TO STAY ON TOP OF ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS,  
YOU NEED TO FOCUS ON FOUR AREAS:**

- ✓ Identifying Potential Contaminants
- ✓ Containing Environmental Risks
- ✓ Disposing of Hazardous Materials
- ✓ Training, Certification and Compliance

## Focus Area #1

# Identifying Potential Contaminants

Environmental risks can stem from a wide range of potential contaminants. Which contaminants are likely to affect your operations will depend on various factors, from the natural climate of the area to the building's location, age and style.

For example, when dealing with older buildings, lead can be common. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), lead-based paint was used in many homes built before 1978. Dust from lead-based paint is a significant source of lead poisoning. Asbestos, which has been used in many building construction materials, is another possible source of contamination.

In areas that have experienced flooding or have a naturally moist environment, mold can be very common and may pose a significant health risk. Other types of microbial contamination, including bacteria and fungus, may also be a concern.

Fuel and chemical spills can occur during both man-made and natural disasters. When fuel and chemicals contaminate soil and water sources, significant damage to the environment can result.

Know which contaminants you're likely to encounter so you can be on guard against them and respond accordingly.



## PRO TIP

To identify potential contaminants, consider:

- Climate
- Building age
- Geographic location
- Building style and construction materials

## Focus Area #2

# Containing Environmental Risks

Identifying the presence of hazardous elements is the first step. Containment comes next. Containment may be necessary to prevent further damage and to protect both the environment and the people, including your workers.

The containment process will depend on the type of material involved. When dealing with potentially harmful materials, follow all relevant regulations, including those that fall under the EPA and Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA). The Institute of Hazardous Materials Management is also a good resource.

For example, asbestos abatement is a necessary process when that substance poses a risk. Without proper containment measures, asbestos can contribute to lung cancer and mesothelioma in the people who come into contact with it.

Mold remediation is another common type of necessary containment. When left unchecked, mold can cause severe property damage, exacerbating the damage that already exists. Exposure to mold spores has also been linked to health problems, so removal is essential.



## USEFUL RESOURCES:

1. [The Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA.gov\)](https://www.epa.gov)
2. [Occupational Health and Safety Administration \(OSHA.gov\)](https://www.osha.gov)
3. [Institute of Hazardous Materials Management \(IHMM.org\)](https://ihmm.org)

## Focus Area #3

# Disposing of Hazardous Materials

**Note: Improper disposal of hazardous material may lead to lawsuits and regulatory actions.**

All companies are responsible for the safe disposal of hazardous materials and must follow all relevant regulations, including the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act.

Hazardous materials may include lead and asbestos, as well as other substances that can be considered toxic or radioactive. To prevent damage to the environment and avoid liability issues, businesses must comply with all state and federal laws. This is not an area where it's acceptable to cut corners.

Even materials that are not inherently dangerous may be subject to regulations. Before disposing of any waste, companies should review local and federal requirements on disposal and recycling.

The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) gives EPA the authority to control hazardous waste from "cradle to grave." This includes the generation, transportation, treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste.

The RCRA also sets forth a framework for the management of non-hazardous solid wastes. Learn more at <https://www.epa.gov/laws-regulations/summary-resource-conservation-and-recovery-act>



## Focus Area #4

# Training, Certification and Compliance

Imagine these two surprisingly common scenarios caused by a lack of training or improperly administered training:

- Your workers dump waste into the local river or onto open land behind the building. This illegal activity is reported to the authorities, and your company is investigated and fined, with negative publicity and lasting damage to reputation.
- Your workers are given appropriate protective gear but fail to understand why it's important or when it should be used. They don't use it properly. As a result, they are exposed to hazards and later become seriously ill and file suit.

Businesses involved in restoration and remediation face a multitude of environmental risk exposures, potential liability and business interruption. To mitigate these potentially lethal and legal risks, training, certification and compliance are essential and mandatory. (In a court of law, ignorance of rules and regulations is no excuse for compliance failure.)

Companies should follow relevant regulations and standards for training and certification and keep documentation of all activities. This is important for all workers, whether they are classified as employees, contractors or subcontractors.

In addition to helping to keep workers safe and environmental risks under control, these measures can also help companies prove that they have fulfilled their duties.



## PRO TIP

To help avoid liability, know the importance of:

- Training
- Communication
- Certification
- Compliance
- Documentation



## About American Technologies, Inc.

Established in 1989 by Gary Moore, American Technologies, Inc., is the nation's largest family-owned and operated restoration contractor. Headquartered in Anaheim, Calif., the company specializes in restoration, environmental and reconstruction services following natural and man-made disasters with an unwavering commitment to customer service. To learn more, visit [ATIrestoration.com](http://ATIrestoration.com) or call (833) 400-0056.



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