



DISASTER
RECOVERY
SERVICES

CONTENTS CLEANING AND RECOVERY



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Introduction

With weather patterns changing and human error being inevitable, disasters happen more frequently than we like. Unfortunately, the contents of a person's home or business become collateral damage. Content recovery and restoration services exist to repair the irreparable or repair valuable items that are too costly to replace. Content cleaning and recovery include multiple trades and craftspeople to execute different services, often for just one item.

SOME GENERAL PREPAREDNESS TIPS:

- Check insurance policies to ensure you have enough damage coverage to repair your destroyed belongings.
- Have an information technology recovery plan in place. Compile an inventory of computer hardware and backup data so you do not depend on paper documentation.
- Develop professional relationships with more than one company in case your primary contractor cannot service content cleaning and recovery.



WHAT ARE CONTENTS?

“Contents,” by restoration industry definition, are anything not structurally a part of a home or business. Most appliances can be considered contents if they are not directly hooked up to a utility in the building. For example, electric oven ranges or refrigerators are treated as content since they can be unplugged from the outlet. If the oven range is connected to a gas line or the refrigerator is connected to plumbing, these types of appliances are considered to be part of the building’s structure. All other items are considered contents - designer office furniture, heirlooms, important paper documents that have yet to be digitized, drapes and rugs, photos, artwork and countless more items. Restoration teams can pack up, clean, repair, deodorize, store and track inventory, and handle every aspect of managing your contents during tumultuous times.

90% OF BUSINESSES FAIL IF THEY DON'T REOPEN QUICKLY ENOUGH AFTER A DISASTER. OFTEN, THE DESTRUCTION OF IMPORTANT CONTENTS AND EQUIPMENT PREVENTS A BUSINESS FROM OPENING*.

*FEMA

Storage and Inventory

When restoration and repair are being performed after a disaster, contents must be packed, inventoried, and stored while the work is being done. The content recovery and restoration team can take care of it all. Some restoration companies, like ATI, work with systems such as Content Track to photograph, document, take inventory, and sort your items. They are then securely stored in warehouse vaults, easily searchable through QR code labeling. Alternatively, restoration firms can provide you the resources to personally handle these steps for your private items.

In some cases, insurance providers don’t want the contents to leave the property and come back after the premises are restored and secure. Even if certain pieces need to be specially and expertly cleaned or simply stored while work is performed, there may be no negotiation with insurance. At this point, on-location cleaning can be utilized. Portable commercial storage containers are brought on-site to have certain items cleaned and stored within these units.



Disaster Recovery Plan

Going through a disaster or a massive restoration or renovation is not easy for anyone. Having a crew of strangers in your space to restore and repair every item you own, though necessary, can be stressful and invasive. Content recovery and restoration teams should request your input and utilize your recovery plan for your home or business as they repair your building and its contents. Especially in the era of COVID-19 and the new environmental considerations brought to the forefront, the recovery plan you build will uniquely fit your business or home's personalized needs.



1 IN **5** COMPANIES
DOESN'T HAVE A DISASTER PLAN*

*FEMA

Content Cleaning & Restoration

Disasters can leave your building and possessions wet, stained, burnt, contaminated, dirty, and odorous. Cleaning and restoring your contents is a process that must be handled meticulously to ensure the best possible outcomes, especially for irreplaceable items like sensitive documents, memorabilia, artwork, valuable furniture, expensive equipment, electronics or treasured personal items. Whatever the article, restoration companies either handle the cleaning and restoration directly or turn to trusted subcontractors who are outstanding in their fields of expertise. Most content restoration firms should have established relationships with fine arts restoration experts, piano restoration and tuning professionals, document recovery specialists, textile dry cleaning experts, and other highly specialized technicians.





DOCUMENT RESTORATION

Restoring damaged documents to a usable condition is a painstaking yet doable process requiring expertise and care. A variety of techniques can be employed depending on the damage type. Common types of damage include water damage, mold damage, and soot, smoke, or burning from a fire. Freeze-drying, air-drying, desiccant dehumidifying, or even hand-dry cleaning techniques are implemented to restore important documents, photos, business records, collectible items—such as preserved historical documents and letters—and the like.

WITH A MYRIAD OF TECHNOLOGIES AVAILABLE, IT IS ALWAYS RECOMMENDED TO BACKUP DOCUMENTS AND FILES DIGITALLY. PHYSICAL DOCUMENTS MAY HOLD TANGIBLE AND HISTORICAL VALUE, BUT IF PROPERLY STORED WITHIN A SERVER AND/OR CLOUD STORAGE SYSTEM, THE INFORMATION WITHIN THOSE DOCUMENTS IS NOT LOST IN THE WRECKAGE. RESTORATION FIRMS HELP CLIENTS SUPPORT THE CREATION OF A DIGITAL LIBRARY BEFORE A DISASTER SO DATA IS NOT LOST AND RECOVER THE PHYSICAL DOCUMENT AFTER A LOSS.



ELECTRONICS/MACHINERY RESTORATION

A reputable restoration company should have a network of trusted professionals who can come to your property to assess and, in most cases, repair and restore damaged or dirty electronics or machinery. When necessary, these experts work to relocate your electronics and machinery to be cleaned, repaired, and restored as needed in their secure facilities and workshops. The use of aqueous stations and drying chambers yields a near 100% success rate. The aqueous stations work by deionizing and taking any minerals out of tap water. Doing so removes water's electrical charge and makes the water safe for electronics cleaning.

Testing occurs both before the item is taken to ensure it is operable and upon repair prior to return. Electronics restoration specialists use sophisticated systems that duplicate how manufacturers clean circuit boards and electrical appliances. This helps ensure hardware data recovery so you don't lose any files, photos, videos, and other essentials that may not be backed up on an external server or cloud storage. If any items can't be restored, or are deemed more expensive to restore than replace, they may be declared as non-salvageable and included on a Statement of Loss Form for insurance purposes.

93% OF COMPANIES WITHOUT DISASTER RECOVERY WHO SUFFER A MAJOR DATA DISASTER ARE OUT OF BUSINESS WITHIN ONE YEAR*.

*PHOENIXNAP - GLOBAL IT SERVICES



FABRICS OR FIBROUS MATERIAL RESTORATION

Many expensive items that can't be replaced are made of various materials. Textiles represent a large portion of a business' or home's contents. Leather, suede, fur, furniture, shoes, hats, bedding, window treatments, rugs, launderable items and dry cleanable clothes all help make up this category of contents restoration. These types of contents are typically removed from the building and taken to a storage facility where they will be sorted and cleaned. Speedy cleaning is vital due to oxidation, residual odors and the setting of stains. For instance, in a water loss it's important to dry the clothes as quickly as possible, as items might bleed and fabrics may degrade. In the event of a fire, hydrocarbon cleaning solutions can remedy various types of fabric.

After a fire, ozone washing is another possible solution in the textile restoration process. This process is ideal for cleaning, deodorizing and delivering smoke-damaged textiles within 24 hours regardless of the severity of the odor while also enhancing the cleaning. Ozonated water (combining water with gaseous “ozone”) is mixed with special chemical additives and kept at a low temperature to keep the ozone from degrading. Ozone can oxidize and break down many surfactants used in cleaning today.

WITH PROPER CLEANING, THE AVERAGE SAVINGS ON TEXTILES AND FABRIC ITEMS AFTER A FIRE OR OTHER DISASTER IS ABOUT 80% OF THE COST OR REPLACEMENT.



HARD CONTENTS

To help salvage hard contents, a popular and highly successful process utilizes an ultrasonic cleaning system. The chemicals and water that are used in this equipment can penetrate deep into every crevice and crack to lift away soot, dirt, grease, residues and more on a wide variety of items, ranging from ceiling fans to dishes to musical instruments. Ultrasonic cleaners produce millions of microscopic bubbles to dislodge dirt from the piece. The machine’s transducers then vibrate, creating sound waves that cause these millions of bubbles to implode repeatedly all over the cleaning tank. What may take 30 minutes with hand scrubbing is reduced to mere seconds – and the technology is only improving.



ART, HEIRLOOMS AND ANTIQUES

Ranging from small amounts of sentimental family heirlooms to hundreds of items in corporate collections and institutions, these pieces require meticulous attention and care. The first step for this type of restoration is the examination process, in which conservators assess the condition of the piece or pieces and outline the appropriate treatment. A proposal describing the condition and suggested treatment, with associated costs and time frame, is drafted for the client to sign and approve. Following approval, conservators begin the painstaking task of restoration, taking every measure to honor an original intent and characteristics. All of the techniques implemented and materials used are of conservation standards and quality.



ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

In the event of a disaster and the necessary restorations that follow, there lies the possibility of exposing harmful substances and materials, like lead, asbestos, mold, chemicals, and other biohazards. Finding a restoration firm, such as ATI, that has an internal Environmental Services team to guide this process is valuable. This highly trained team will direct the safe and proper handling, removal, and disposal of these hazardous materials. However, since the cleaning and restoration teams are often exposed to some of these elements, other team members may have the relevant certifications for these environmental risks as well.

Certifications

The Institute of Inspection, Cleaning, and Restoration Certification (IICRC) is the certifying body covering and certifying restoration industry standards. Through IICRC, OSHA, and other programs, content restoration teams train and receive certifications that allow the safe handling of items and navigation through a worksite. Below are the most common certifications for a content cleaning and restoration team member to have:

- IICRC for water damage, applied structural drying, fire and smoke restoration, and odor control
- The Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) "Asbestos Abatement Contractor," providing team members with the proper guidelines to remove asbestos
- Subrogation 1 & 2, teaching the chain of custody and securing evidence that may have caused a loss
- Xactimate, on how to use the estimating platform
- Lead Renovation, Repair, and Painting (RRP), on how to handle lead-based paints
- Coronavirus Disinfection, on how to disinfect





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