The First 24 Hours After Water Damage

A guide for Alton and Metro East homeowners

GATEWAY WATER & MOLD

The First 24 Hours After Water Damage: A Guide for Alton and Metro East Homeowners

Water in a home feels urgent because it is. This short guide covers what to do first, what to leave alone, and what to expect when a restoration crew arrives. It is general guidance. Every property is different, and the right scope depends on what is actually found on site.

Step one: make it safe and stop the source

If water is near outlets, appliances or the electrical panel, stay out of it until the power to that area is off. If the water is from a supply line, close the main shutoff. If it may be sewage, keep people and pets away from it.

Sewage and storm water are not the same as a clean supply leak, and they are handled differently. Gateway's sewage cleanup page explains why.



Watch: Can I remove the water myself? | St. Louis Water & Mold Answers

Step two: document before anything is moved

Take wide photos of each affected room, then close photos of the damage and of the source if it can be seen. Note the time the water was found. Keep damaged items until the insurer has had a chance to see them or their photos.

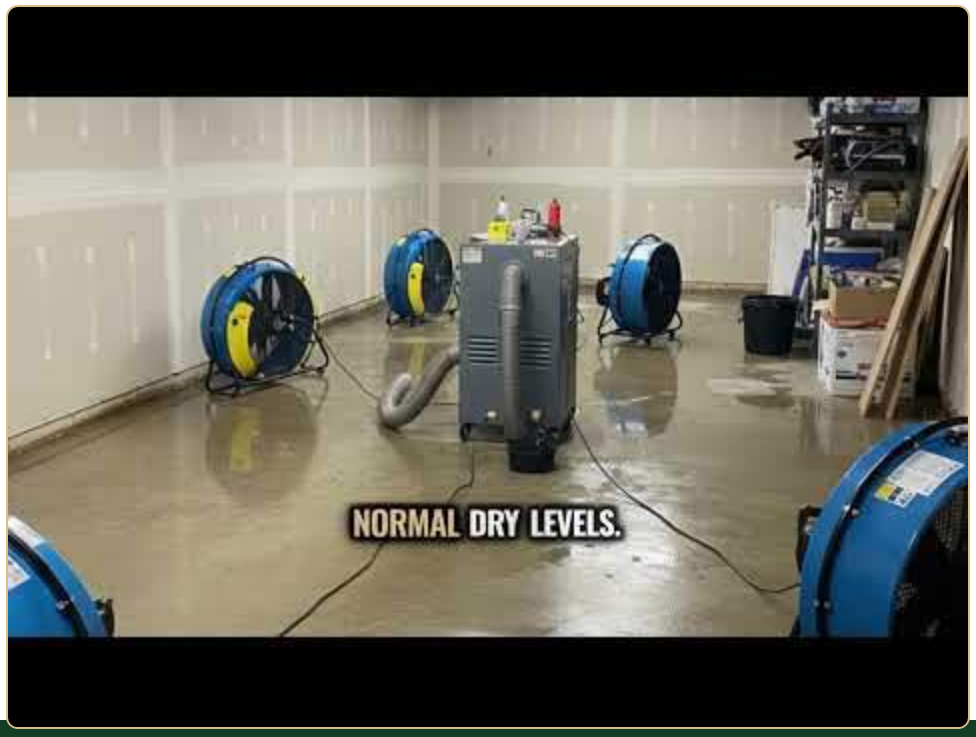
Gateway's article on what to document before filing a water damage claim lists what adjusters usually ask for. Documentation supports a claim. It does not guarantee coverage, which depends on the policy.

Step three: call for extraction and drying

Standing water keeps soaking into carpet pad, subfloor and drywall the longer it sits. Gateway's emergency water extraction page describes how that progresses and what extraction involves.

For homes in Alton, see water damage restoration in Alton, IL. The phone line is (314) 947-3419.

Gateway's dispatch window for Alton is under 2 hours.



Watch: How long does it take to dry out a house after a flood? | St. Louis Water & Mold Answers

What the crew will do

A restoration visit usually has two parts. Mitigation comes first: finding the source, extracting water, and setting up drying equipment. Restoration follows: repairing or replacing what could not be dried.



Watch: What's the difference between water mitigation and restoration? | St. Louis Water & Mold Answers

Questions worth asking any restoration company:

- What moisture readings were taken, and where?
- Which materials can be dried in place and which need to come out?
- How will progress be checked each day?
- What documentation will I get for my insurer?

Common misconception: "It looks dry, so it is dry"

Surfaces dry long before the materials behind them do. Drywall, insulation and subfloor can hold moisture that cannot be seen or felt. That hidden moisture is what leads to odor and mold later, which is why drying is measured with meters and not judged by eye.

If a musty smell or visible growth appears after a leak, see Gateway's mold remediation page.



Watch: How do you test for mold in a house? | St. Louis Water & Mold Answers

Terms to know

- **Extraction:** removing standing water with pumps and vacuums.
- **Structural drying:** using air movers and dehumidifiers to dry building materials to a measured target.
- **Moisture mapping:** taking readings across walls and floors to find how far water travelled.

More from Gateway Water & Mold

More short answers are on the Gateway Water & Mold YouTube channel. Service details for the area are on the Alton service area page.



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Water damage restoration and mold remediation

(314) 947-3419

gatewaywatermold.com