



Water Damage and the Dangers

Categories of Water Damage

According to IICRC Standard and Reference Guide for Professional Water Damage Restoration there are three categories of water that cause damage in buildings. They are summarized as follows:

Category 1 Water - Refers to a source of water that does not pose substantial threat to humans and classified as "**Clean Water**". Category 1 water may become progressively contaminated as it mixes with soils on or within floor coverings or building assemblies (walls, decking, subflooring). Time and temperature, which promote the growth and amplification of microorganisms in water can cause Category 1 water to degrade.

Examples are broken water supply lines, tub or sink overflows or appliance malfunctions that involves water supply lines.

Category 2 Water - Refers to a source of water that contains a significant degree of chemical, biological or physical contaminants and causes discomfort or sickness when exposed or even consumed. Known as "**Grey Water**". This type carries micro organisms. Examples are toilet bowls with urine (no feces), sump pump failures, and water discharge from dishwashers or washing machines.

Category 3 Water - Known as "**Black Water**" and are grossly unsanitary. This water contains unsanitary agents, harmful bacteria and fungi, causing severe discomfort or sickness. Type 3 are contaminated water sources that affects the indoor environment. This category includes water sources from sewage, seawater, rising water from rivers or streams, ground surface water or standing water.

Category 2 Water or Grey Water that is not promptly removed from the structure and or have remained stagnant may be re classified as Category 3 Water. Toilet back-ups that originate from beyond the toilet trap is considered black water contamination regardless of visible content or color.