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INFORMATION PLEASE...

Technical Data for Fire, Smoke and Water Damage

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Communication

It is obviously important for a restoration professional to know and understand the differences between the cleaning and restoration requirements after a protein fire verses an electrical fire. Likewise, knowing how to properly clean and sanitize following a disaster caused by a mainline sewage backup is also important.

A professional restorer is continually learning and improving the technical knowledge that enables him/her to perform the appropriate mitigation of a home or office after a catastrophe. A quality-minded restoration professional will continue to keep informed and attend a variety of training sessions that will enable him/her to be at the cutting edge of property damage restoration and mitigation.

Although important, the technical training is not the only skill that is required. A restoration professional must also be a specialist in the area of communication. The homeowner, the agent, and the adjuster all want to know the extent of the damages, how the job will be performed, the length of time it will take to perform the job, and last, but certainly not least, the cost of the job. Of course, it should be understood that this information is always wanted immediately and in different ways for each individual involved.

The homeowner is always interested in how the process is going to disrupt the family's lifestyle. What work is to be done? How will the work be performed? And, how long will the work take? Some homeowners are interested in the smallest details of the process, and for others, the details tend to be too technical, overwhelming, and possibly boring. The ability to provide appropriate, understandable terminology and other information is a must.

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mation is a must.

The restoration professional needs to determine the extent and depth of communication necessary and wanted by each individual. It is also important to understand that this may be true even within the same household. The husband may require a different level of understanding than the wife, and it is often a necessary part of the communication process to repeat the same information many times and in many ways.

The insurance agent often has different needs in the flow of communication.

The homeowner is their client. The insurance agent must be assured that the needs of the homeowner are being taken care of at all times. The relationship between the homeowner and the agent should be treated as a very special situation that should not be damaged in any way. Because of the insurance agent's relationship with the homeowner, it is the responsibility of the restoration professional

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to convey to the agent that the concerns of their client are being addressed appropriately.

Last, but not least, are the needs of the adjuster. Facts must be presented properly, and documentation should always accompany the facts. As items are explained, reasons should be given. The adjuster needs to fully understand and comprehend the extent of the loss, how the loss was handled, why it was handled in the manner that it was, the cost of the job, and how those costs were determined.

A professional restorer will take in to account the larger picture. Decisions should be made to ensure excellent communication concerning the loss and should be timely, accurate, and complete.

A professional restoration firm will have a consistent customer service program in place at all times. It will be recognized that there are really several "customers" all of whom need to be kept in the communication loop. It is necessary to insure that commu-

nication is a two-way path between all parties.

A restoration specialist also knows that communication is not a one-time item on the agenda. Every day the work continues, the communication must continue. All persons involved in the loss need to be continuously updated on the progress and aspects of the job. There should be no surprises, guesswork, or assumptions made by anyone.

Communication is important, but knowing what to communicate and to whom that communication should be directed is also very important. An over-abundance of information is usually available.

A restoration professional must be able to distinguish the differences and be able to effectively communicate to all parties at all times in the very best manner so that that each person can clearly understand and use the information provided.

By using **proper communication techniques** and having a consistent customer

service plan in place, a restoration professional can help to assure a satisfied client.

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