

# “411”

INFORMATION PLEASE...

## Technical Data for Fire, Smoke and Water Damage

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### Hardwood Floor Drying

In today's homes, finished flooring materials are becoming more popular than carpet. The success of the restoration process, as a result of water damage, may be dependent upon the following circumstances: response time, flooring type, replacement value, type of wood, type of finish, method of installation, amount of moisture, and the degree of damage already evident. A restoration professional will be able to properly evaluate the floor and implement a plan that will help to ensure its salvageability.

As in all water related incidents, time is crucial. The longer the moisture remains left untreated, the greater the potential for permanent damage. Hardwood flooring will absorb moisture more slowly due to the porosity of the product. A restoration specialist will be ready to respond at any time of the day or night to the emergency.

Inspection is always crucial when evaluating a

hardwood floor for drying. Hardwood flooring comes in a variety of species. Oak, pine, maple, and cherry are just a few. More and more exotic species are being utilized in flooring. Every variety poses different challenges in the drying process due to the different levels of moisture absorption. There are also varieties of flooring that look like wood but are not. These

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floors will sometimes be manufactured with a laminate on the surface and a substructure consisting of particle board. When moisture seeps beneath these floors, drying is effectively impossible due to the inability to remove the moisture from beneath them as a result of the laminate surface acting as a vapor barrier. A restoration professional will be able to properly evaluate the floor for drying ability.

The initial installation method of the hardwood flooring must also be assessed. Original installation may have been nailed, glued, or it may have been installed in a floating method. Nailed floors may cause the lifting of the nails from the substrate if enough cupping and distortion occurs as a result of water absorption. The moisture may allow for the release of the glue if the floor has been glued onto the substrate. If the floor is of a floating type, it may not be true wood and may be a laminated product. A qualified restoration professional will be aware of these differences in installation.

Tongue and groove hardwood flooring may "cup" when moisture has been absorbed. With the use of surface and/or subsurface drying methods and proper dehumidification, airflow can be forced beneath the surface of the floor (either in a positive or negative manner) to allow for the removal of this moisture. It may also be necessary to ac-

cess the floor from below to allow for faster drying. Effective drying of a hardwood floor is a slow process. It will sometimes take 7 to 10 days to allow the floor to release enough water to halt the forced drying process. A restoration specialist will know that to remove all the absorbed water from the floor will result in excessive costs and must allow nature to assist in the process.

A professional restoration specialist will continue to dry the hardwood flooring until the moisture content is reduced to within 4% of the dry standard of the floor. At this point in time, nature will remove the remaining water, although slowly. This time frame may be anywhere from three to six months. Education in this process is paramount for a successful job to be performed, and the restoration professional will be able to educate the homeowner and all involved parties in this process.

After the drying of the hardwood has been completed, damage to the finish

of the floor may be evident. Finishes such as waxes and polyurethane may inhibit the evaporation of the absorbed moisture. They will sometimes have to be removed in the drying process to allow for moisture removal. If the hardwood floor cups slightly, the finish may check and crack due to the movement of the wood product. This is a normal part of the drying process and should be expected. A qualified restoration specialist knows that the true value in the floor is in the wood product. After complete drying has been accomplished, the floor can be re-finished.

Hardwood floor drying is a specialty. Purofirst/Puroclean restoration professionals have the necessary knowledge to properly evaluate the various types of floors and also have the required specialty equipment to enable the salvageability of the hardwood floors.

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