

“411”

INFORMATION PLEASE...

Technical Data for Fire, Smoke and Water Damage

VOL XII NO 9

The Use of Antimicrobials

The use of antimicrobials is often confusing and misunderstood by most individuals. It is often thought a “magic bullet” solution exists that can be easily applied to destroy all of the harmful microorganisms that develop as a result of water damage and mold growth. Because of this way of thinking, professional restoration firms must realize that there is an apparent misconception between what the customer is expecting and what the reality of the treatment is.

Antimicrobials are substances utilized for the destruction or growth suppression of harmful microorganisms whether they are bacteria, viruses, or fungi. These antimicrobials are registered and regulated by the United States Environmental Protection Agency under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). Some states actually require the users of these products to be licensed pes-

ticide applicators. A professional restoration company will comply with all of the necessary training, safety, and licensing requirements as a result of FIFRA.

A professional restoration specialist will realize that a number of limitations exist in the use of antimicrobials. Effective training and proper supervision of employ-

occupants of the structure, and safety for anyone entering the structure must be considered. There are some potential risks when utilizing antimicrobials. These products are classified as a biocide, which references a “life killer”. Professional restorers will consider if the occupants are very young, elderly, unhealthy or sick in general. The potential hazards and benefits must be discussed with the customer, and a written, informed consent should be obtained prior to the product’s application. It may be

necessary to ask the occupants of the structure to vacate the premises during the application of antimicrobials. Professional restoration technicians will be able to appropriately assess the circumstances and be able to make sure that all individuals are protected.

The effectiveness of antimicrobials will vary by product. Label claims will include activity against groups

"Antimicrobials are substances utilized for the destruction or growth suppression of harmful microorganisms whether they are bacteria, viruses, or fungi. "

ees handling these products must be consistent and continuous. Label instructions must be followed as written. This applies to methods of application and what it can be applied to. Dwell times must be allowed for. Application details should be properly documented.

Safety is always a top priority of a professional restoration company. Safety for the employee, safety for the

Unauthorized Use Prohibited - Prior permission required for copying.

such bactericide, fungicide, virucide, tuberculocide, and sporicide.

Some products may have special use claims against specific microbes, such as Legionella pneumophila, Mycobacterium tuberculosis, Aspergillus fumigatus, Hepatitis or HIV. A professional restoration company will refrain from making statements or representations to a customer beyond what is on the label of the product. Material Safety Data Sheets are available from the professional restoration company and can be made readily available to the homeowner. If the homeowner has concerns, the restoration professional will direct the homeowner to discuss the use of these products with their doctor.

The use of antimicrobials is not recommended in the restoration of indoor water-damaged or microbial-contaminated environments, unless the source has been determined to be contaminated. Effective remediation of water-damaged buildings

should employ the use of appropriate rapid drying techniques and/or complete removal of contaminated materials through detailed cleaning or demolition and appropriate disposal of materials. Because of this, the application of an antimicrobial will actually serve no purpose that could not be accomplished with a detergent solution. A professional restoration specialist will know when to apply and when it is not necessary to apply these products. When the source of the water damage is determined to be "black water," a significant health risk may be present from a variety of infectious agents. The use of antimicrobials in this situation will be utilized to help reduce and control microorganisms from the environment to assist in achieving safe levels as determined by public health standards.

Professional restoration companies will have the necessary training to know when to use antimicrobial products. They will know that the use of antimicrobials is

not always automatic, but an appropriate evaluation of the benefits or hazards should always be conducted.

MKW 9/2006

*This publication provided courtesy of your local PuroSystems office.
Offices Independently Owned and Operated.*



A Single Source Provider™ of
Fire & Water Damage Restoration & Reconstruction



The Paramedics of Property Damage®
Mitigation and Restoration Specialists

Copyright © 2003-2006. All rights reserved in all countries.
Reproduction of this material is prohibited without prior permission.