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# What NOT to do

in case of water intrusion

- Do not put yourself or tenants in an unnecessary dangerous or hazardous situation.
- Do not wait any longer than necessary to stop the water intrusion and start the drying/restoration process.
- Do not wait to notify your insurance company to determine coverage.
- Do not disturb any building materials that may have regulated hazardous materials such as asbestos, lead paint, or silica.
- Do not use fans to dry the area if there is contaminated water (like sewage or flood water) or if you find mold growth. Strong air flow can spread the contamination.
- Do not paint over mold that is growing on building material.

## Questions?

Call the Austin Code Department at  
(512) 974-CODE [2633]  
You can also visit our website:  
[austintexas.gov/code](http://austintexas.gov/code)

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WHAT TO DO WHEN

# WATER ENTERS YOUR PROPERTY

Information for Property Representatives

If one or more of your tenants has experienced a water intrusion event – like a plumbing leak, roof leak, drainage issue, or other excess water – here are some steps to follow.

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## Immediately after the event

Removing water and drying the area quickly is key to preventing mold/further damage and protecting tenant safety.

- Make sure the area is safe from hazards like electrical, slip and fall, and collapsing ceiling. **If the area is not safe, neither you nor your tenants should enter the area. Tenants should be provided with alternate accommodations.**
- Determine where the leak came from and fix it as soon as possible. Different water sources carry different levels of contamination (e.g. kitchen sink leak vs. toilet back up).
- Work with tenants and provide assistance to remove personal items from direct exposure to water.
- Place buckets under any roof leaks to minimize damage and remove all liquid as much as you can.
- Be prepared with drying fans or have a plan for obtaining fans in case of a water emergency.
- If weather is warm and dry, open windows and doors to let air in. If weather is cold and/or wet, use fans and building HVAC. **DO NOT use fans if water may be contaminated.**

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## Next steps

towards restoration

Professional water restoration or remediation services may be needed. It is important to contact professionals as soon as possible to prevent mold growth and further damage. Always use professional restoration contractors that are qualified, certified, and insured to perform needed services.

- Contaminated environments should be properly contained using plastic sheeting and placed under negative pressure using HEPA filtration equipment.
- Carpet, padding, insulation, and other porous building materials should generally be removed, depending on the level of water contamination. Any demolition should be performed by a professional as soon as possible.
- Follow all state and federal regulations for regulated hazardous materials like asbestos, lead paint, and silica. Follow State of Texas regulations for professionals handling mold assessments and remediation.
- All water damage work should be done in accordance with the Standard of Care for water restoration and mold remediation.
- Contact your property insurance to determine policy coverage.

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## What to expect from professional services

- Professionals may use equipment like air movers, dehumidifiers, and HEPA filtration equipment to dry the structure. Do not turn equipment off or move it unless authorized by a professional. Explain this to the occupants as well.
- Some materials and/or contents may not be restorable due to the level of contamination.
- Depending on the extent of the damage, work may last between 5 and 15 days. Necessary demolition increases the time of the project.
- Professional-grade disinfectants or chemicals may be used to help control the spread of bacteria, viruses, and mold.
- If mold contamination covers more than 25 square feet, the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) requires licensed professionals to be involved.
- For information on City of Austin permitting requirements, call 3-1-1.

