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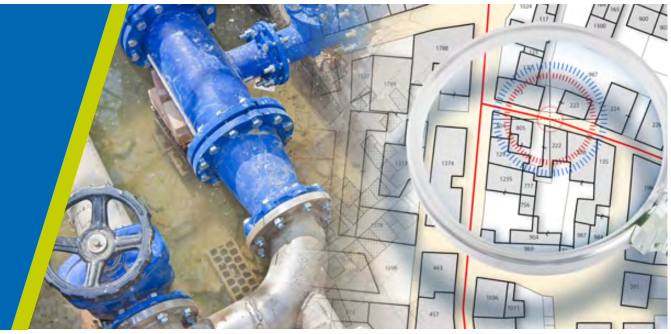
AIRE Bulletin

Water Damage Mitigation Plan



Water damage is one of the most frequent and costly sources of loss in buildings. All properties, from apartments and office buildings to industrial warehouses, rely on extensive plumbing systems connected to a water supply. Even a minor pipe failure, roof leak, or equipment malfunction can escalate rapidly, leading to property damage, mold growth, operational disruption, tenant displacement, business interruption, and increased insurance costs.

A rapid initial response is critical. The first 15 to 30 minutes often determine the extent of damage and overall recovery cost. A concise, readily accessible mitigation plan helps minimize damage, downtime, and financial impact. At a minimum, an effective plan includes:

- **Water Shutoff Location Map** – allows water sources to be quickly identified and isolated
- **Emergency Contact List** – ensures appropriate personnel and vendors can be reached immediately
- **On-Site Water Mitigation Spill Kit** – provides immediate, on-site response capability
- **Staff Training** – ensures staff are prepared and confident in response procedures

This guide is intended to support property owners and managers in developing a site-specific water damage mitigation plan. Each plan should be tailored to the building's layout, systems, staffing, and risk profile.

Water Shutoff Location Map

Maintain a current, clearly labeled map showing the locations of all water shutoff valves. Staff should know where the map is stored, and it should be available in multiple locations. At a minimum, the map should identify:

- Main domestic water shutoff
- Shutoffs for floors, building sections, or individual units
- Irrigation shutoffs
- Fire protection shutoffs (DO NOT SHUT OFF without proper authorization)

Include photographs with the map to aid identification, and note any valves located behind locked doors. Shutoff valves should also be physically labeled throughout the building. Keep the map with the formal plan which could be kept in additional locations such as the manager's office, maintenance office, mechanical or electrical rooms, or in a digital format where possible.

Emergency Contact List

The emergency contact list defines who should be contacted, and in what order, in the event of a water incident. Typical contacts include:

- Property Manager
- Maintenance Supervisor
- After-hours on-call contact
- Licensed plumber
- Water damage restoration vendor
- Sprinkler and fire protection vendor
- Insurance carrier (claims department)
- Building owner representative
- Local emergency services (911)

Review and update this list annually, or whenever personnel or vendor information changes.

On-Site Water Mitigation Spill Kit

Store a designated water damage spill kit in a clearly labeled, easily accessible location. A mobile cart is recommended where feasible. Example contents include:

- Containment and Diversion – water dams or absorbent socks, plastic sheeting, sandbags or quick-dam barriers
- Water Removal – wet/dry shop vacuum, buckets, utility pump
- Drying Equipment – commercial air movers or fans, dehumidifier
- Absorption and Cleanup – towels, absorbent pads, mop and bucket
- Safety Equipment – rubber gloves, safety glasses, wet floor signage

Inspect the spill kit quarterly and restock supplies as needed.

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Staff Training

Train all staff annually on water damage response procedures. After-hours security and janitorial personnel should also be familiar with the plan. Training should include:

- Review of the shutoff map and operation of water shutoff valves
- Emergency contact and notification procedures
- Proper deployment of spill kit materials
- Electrical safety considerations during water events
- Documentation and reporting procedures

Note: Staff should never enter standing water where energized electrical equipment may be present and should isolate power where safe to do so before initiating mitigation.

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