

# Flood Damage Restoration Tips and Info for the Chicago Area

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With Spring in full swing and the beginning of **flood season** here, Chicagoland property owners and managers need to get serious about the threat of flooding, the **Flood Damage Restoration** process.

Floods are destructive and unpredictable. Not only can it destroy livelihoods and cause injuries or deaths, but it can also cause extensive damage to your home or business and cut off essential services.

In addition to managing any physical damage to your property, dealing with **flood damage** is always an extremely stressful and emotional process, especially if you are caught unprepared for the storm. Flooding is more common than you may think in Chicago, and being caught off guard could bring a slow and costly recovery.

Here at **ServiceMaster Restoration By Simons**, our professionals have seen hundreds of flood damage situations that could have been prevented before the storm even hit. Commit to a few hours of improving your home's security and follow our quick and easy tips to bring peace of mind that your property will remain relatively safe against any potential flood threats.

First, it's important to understand the flood risk in your specific Chicagoland neighborhood or suburb so you can prepare your property accordingly for immediate response when heavy rains or storm surges threaten the area. With a little bit of research, you can determine if your neighborhood or town is more prone to flooding than others. There are several sites that give good information regarding flood zones and river sheds. FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program website – **FloodSmart.gov** is an informative website with plenty of advice on preparing for a flood and obtaining proper flood insurance.



## Below are some tips for Preparing for Floods.

### Preparing for Flooding

- Elevating critical utilities is essential. Breaker boxes, fuse panels, electric sockets, appliances and heating systems should be elevated as much as possible in basements where water levels can sometimes reach up to 4-5 feet in some instances, especially for those that live near large bodies of water like rivers and lakes.
- Make sure your sump pump is working and properly maintained. (Sump pump failure happens often and for many different reasons. Click on our website to learn more.)
- Install a battery-powered backup to the sump pump in the event of a power loss.
- Install a water alarm. This will alert you in the event of water rise in your basement.
- Clean debris from your gutter and downspouts. Clogged gutters can lead to water accumulation that usually gathers at your properties foundation lines, thus soaking through the foundation and into your basement.
- Move valuables and important documents to a safe dry place away from potential flood zones in your basement.
- Copies of irreplaceable documents like birth certificates, passports or family photo's should be stored in an area, preferably not the basement, that is safe and dry.
- Create an **emergency supply kit**. Some food, bottled water, first aid supplies, medicines, a flash light, a radio, water proof boots, gloves and face masks should suffice, but you can add whatever else you like to that kit.
- Do you have pets? Including a plan for your pet is as essential as this plan is for you!

\*\*Information on this list is gathered from [floodsmart.gov](https://www.floodsmart.gov)

Since basements are the lowest point of your property, it's typically the most affected by water damage since it tends to flood first. When flood disasters strike, trust that ServiceMaster Restoration By Simons can get an expert team of technicians out to your property **for Flood Damage Restoration** within hours. Oftentimes with our quick response, it's possible to salvage your property and belongings and restore them before they are ruined.

### Once flooding has occurred, here's how our process works:

We perform an initial assessment. This includes a determination of the type of flood damage. Where did the water come from? Did it come from a sewer back-up or did it originate externally and end up in the basement, namely basement window wells, foundation cracks, or water supply line breakage.

Per IICRC Standards, an initial determination of the intruding water needs to be made.

The IICRC is a certification and Standards Developing Organization (SDO) for the inspection, cleaning and restoration industries, worldwide.

The following information describes the [basic categories and classifications of Water Damage](#). Though not exhaustive, this list provides a basic understanding of how Certified Water Damage Restoration firms like ServiceMaster Restoration By Simons determine the level of water damage to your property.

### **Three Basic Categories of Water**

**Category 1** originates from a sanitary source and poses no substantial risk from dermal, ingestion, or inhalation exposure. However, it may not always remain clean after it comes into contact with other surfaces or materials.

**Category 2** contains significant contamination and has the potential to cause discomfort or sickness if contacted or consumed by humans. It may contain potentially unsafe levels of microorganisms or nutrients for microorganisms, as well as other organic or inorganic matter (chemical or biological).

**Category 3** is grossly contaminated and may contain pathogenic, toxigenic or other harmful agents. Such water sources may carry silt, organic matter, pesticides, heavy metals, regulated materials, or toxic organic substances.

***Time and temperature can also affect the quality of water, thereby changing its category.***  
***\*Refer to the IICRC S500 for complete definitions.***

### **The Four Primary Classifications of Water Damage**

**Class 1** is the least amount of water, absorption and evaporation. It affects only part of a room or area, or larger areas containing materials that have absorbed minimal moisture. Little or no wet carpet and/or cushion is present.

**Class 2** involves a large amount of water, absorption and evaporation. It affects at least an entire room of carpet and cushion (pad). Water has wicked up walls less than 24 inches. There is moisture remaining in structural materials and substructure soil.

**Class 3** involves the greatest amount of water, absorption and evaporation. Water may have come from overhead. Ceilings, walls, insulation, carpet, cushion and subfloor in virtually all of the entire area are saturated.

**Class 4** relates to specialty drying situations. Wet materials with very low permeance/porosity (e.g. hardwood, plaster, brick, concrete, light-weight concrete and stone). Typically, there are deep pockets of saturation, which require very low specific humidity. These types of losses may require longer drying times and special methods.

***\*Refer to the IICRC S500 for complete definitions.***



After the initial findings it is important to have a discussion with your ServiceMaster Simons professional about the course of action, timelines and cost, especially if the **flood damage restoration service** is not part of an insurance claim. You, the property owner will be much better prepared for the next steps in remediating the water damage if there is a plan of action. Next, with your consent, the Flood Damage Restoration can begin.

**Here is an overview of the mitigation process:**

- Extraction of the water
- Removal of wet and affected items (drywall, baseboard, flooring and personal content)
- Anti-microbial application to prevent secondary damage, mold from forming
- Drying and dehumidification
- During the restoration process, we work directly with your insurance company so your claims are processed as fast as possible

Remember this is an overview, and more specific services may occur depending on the scope and plan of action.

We understand that dealing with **flooding on your property** is one of the more stressful events you might encounter. Trust the professionals at ServiceMaster Restoration By Simons and let us help you get your life back to normal so you can focus on what matters.

ServiceMaster Restoration By Simons is a MBE/WBE certified minority and women-owned and family run company serving the Chicago Area. The business provides disaster restoration services for damages caused by tornadoes, water, fire, flooding, mold remediation, and a wide range of interior specialty cleaning (hoarder/clutter, post construction, carpet & upholstery) to residential and commercial customers. For more information, give us a call at 773-376-1110 or visit [servicemasterbysimons.com](http://servicemasterbysimons.com).



Sam Simon

*As Managing Director of ServiceMaster by Simons, Sam has over 20 years of experience in the disaster restoration industry. Sam holds the cleaning industry's highest technical designation as an IICRC Master Water Restorer and Master Fire Restorer and has many more designations. His vast knowledge of "best practices" in the Water & Fire Damage Restoration industry makes him an invaluable resource to this company and to the clients he serves.*