



BASEMENT FLOOD ACTION
PLAN: WHAT TO DO IN THE
FIRST 24 HOURS

Rapid Restoration Team

A simple checklist for homeowners who discover water in the basement.

Why this matters:

A wet basement can turn into a big (and expensive) problem fast. The first 24 hours are critical for:

- Keeping your family safe
- Reducing damage to your home and belongings
- Helping your insurance claim go smoother
- Preventing mold from growing

Use this checklist to stay calm and take the right steps if you ever walk downstairs and find water on the floor.

SECTION 1 – FIRST 15 MINUTES: SAFETY FIRST

1. Stay calm and think safety.

- Don't rush into standing water.
- If the water is near outlets, appliances, or a breaker panel, do not step in.

2. Watch for electrical danger.

- If you can safely reach your electrical panel *without walking through water*, turn off power to the affected area.
- If you're unsure, stay out of the water and call an electrician or restoration company.

3. Look for signs of contamination.

- Does the water smell like sewage? Is it coming from a floor drain, toilet, or sewer backup?

- If yes, avoid contact with the water. This is considered contaminated and needs professional handling.
 - If it looks like clean water (from a burst pipe, broken supply line, or leaking appliance), still avoid skin contact if you can.
4. Stop or reduce the source (if possible and safe).
- Check:
 - Sump pump: Is it running? Is the breaker tripped?
 - Visible pipes: Do you see spraying, dripping, or a burst line?
 - Appliances: Is it near the water heater, washing machine, or fridge line?
 - If you see an obvious leak and can reach the main water shut-off without going through water, turn the water off.
5. Take a quick video of the scene.
- Before moving anything, grab a 10–30 second video on your phone of the whole area.
 - This helps with:
 - Remembering how bad it was
 - Showing your insurance company or contractor later

SECTION 2 – FIRST HOUR: PROTECT YOUR HOME & BELONGINGS

6. Protect what you can (only if it's safe to enter).

If the area is safe and the water is shallow:

- Move items off the floor onto dry shelves or upstairs, especially:
 - Cardboard boxes
 - Area rugs
 - Furniture with fabric or wood legs
 - Electronics
- Prioritize sentimental items first (photos, keepsakes, kids' items).

7. Start basic water control (for small amounts only).

If it's a small puddle or thin layer and the water looks clean:

- Use old towels to block water from spreading into dry areas.
- Place a bucket or container under any active drip (if reachable safely).
- Do not plug in new equipment (fans, shop vacs, etc.) while standing in water.

8. Take clear photos for documentation.

- Wide shots of the room
- Close-ups of:
 - The water line on walls or furniture
 - Damaged belongings
 - The suspected source (if visible)
- Try to capture timestamps or keep them in your phone's photo log.

SECTION 3 – WITHIN THE FIRST FEW HOURS: CALLS TO MAKE

9. Call a trusted water damage professional.

- Even if you're not sure you'll file an insurance claim, a quick call can help you decide what's needed.
- Ask:
 - "Do you offer 24/7 emergency service?"
 - "Can you take moisture readings and photos for insurance?"
 - "Can you walk me through whether this is likely an insurance claim or out-of-pocket?"

Rapid Restoration Team

24/7 Water & Mold Help – Call/Text: 224-478-7677

10. Decide whether to contact your insurance company.

Every policy is different, but in general:

- If there is significant damage (soaked walls, flooring, multiple rooms, or high-value items), it's usually worth calling your insurance carrier or agent to ask about coverage.
- Have ready:
 - Date and time you discovered the water
 - Photos/video of the damage
 - Any steps you've already taken

(This is not legal or insurance advice—just general guidance.)

SECTION 4 – WITHIN 24 HOURS: DRYING & MOLD PREVENTION

Mold can begin to grow within 24–48 hours on wet materials like drywall, carpet, and wood. The goal is to dry things as quickly and safely as possible.

11. Increase air movement (if safe and weather allows).

- If humidity outside is low and there's no risk of more water coming in, you can:
 - Open basement windows slightly for fresh air
 - Run existing fans or dehumidifiers that were already plugged into *dry* outlets
- Do not place fans directly on contaminated water or sewage.

12. Understand what usually needs professional help.

You'll likely need a professional if:

- Water has soaked drywall, baseboards, or insulation
- Carpet and padding are saturated, not just damp

- The water came from sewage, a drain backup, or unknown source
- You see staining, swelling, or warping on walls, trim, or cabinets
- There's a strong musty or foul odor

13. Watch for early mold warning signs over the next few days.

- Musty or earthy smells that don't go away
- Discoloration on walls, baseboards, or wood
- Condensation or continued dampness in corners

If you notice any of these, call a water/mold restoration pro.

SECTION 5 – WHAT NOT TO DO

To keep everyone safe and avoid making damage worse, avoid:

- Walking through deep water near electrical outlets or panels
- Using a household vacuum to suck up water
- Plugging in new cords, fans, or equipment while standing in water
- Spraying bleach all over wet surfaces (it doesn't fix the moisture problem and can create fumes)
- Ignoring "just a little" water and hoping it dries on its own

SECTION 6 – WHEN TO CALL RAPID RESTORATION TEAM

Call Rapid Restoration Team When:

- There's more than a small puddle on the basement floor
- Water is touching walls, baseboards, cabinets, or built-in shelving
- The sump pump failed or you're not sure what caused the water
- You smell something musty or see signs of mold
- You need photos, readings, and documentation for an insurance claim

Rapid Restoration Team

Your local Chicagoland water damage & mold specialists. *We help homeowners and businesses with water, mold, and clean-up so you don't have to figure it out alone.*

 www.RapidRestorationIL.com

 224-478-7677