



What To Do When You Discover Water On Your Basement Floor

The discovery of a flooded basement, wet or damp carpet, a puddle on a concrete or ceramic floor, buckled hardwood flooring, or swollen laminate flooring is usually pretty stressful for most homeowners. The cause of this stress might be the result of not knowing why there is water in the basement when there has never been any before, or because of concerns over mould growth and carpet/flooring and/or furniture and basement damage.

Once you have discovered that water has leaked into your basement, your next actions are predicated upon the severity of the problem. For example, the actions that need to be taken upon discovering a damp carpet, flooring damage, or a puddle on the basement floor (we'll refer to this as a minor problem) are far different than the actions required when there is significant active flooding, such as the presence of water everywhere in your basement (we'll refer to this as a major problem).

How To Deal With Minor Problems

In dealing with minor problems, isolating the cause of the basement leak should not be priority one. Here is a step-by-step checklist of actions to take:

1. Determine how extensive the problem is.

Look around your basement to check if the basement floor is wet in a single location or multiple locations.

2. Based on the extent of the problem, move your furniture or stored items to a dry location. If cardboard boxes are wet, remove the contents immediately and dry whatever items are wet.
3. Dry the affected areas of your basement.
 - a. For damp or wet carpeting, try to dry the carpet as much as you can. This can be accomplished using a Shop Vac or towels depending on how wet the carpet is. Next, roll the carpet back to expose the underside of the carpet; this is done to limit the likelihood of mould growth on the underside of the carpet. Once you



have done this you can determine how to deal with the underpad. Since an underpad is much like a sponge it is very difficult to dry. If it is simply damp, air drying it may be sufficient; if it is soaking wet, cut out the affected area and throw it out. Underpad is inexpensive and replacement of a section will never be visible. Rotten wooden carpet tack strip should be disposed of and is inexpensive to replace.

- b. Ceramic flooring can be dried simply by mopping up the water or even by drying it with large beach towels.
 - c. Hardwood and laminate flooring can only be dried using a mop, followed by towels. Replacing the damaged flooring must wait until the problem has been corrected completely.
 - d. In unfinished basements, the concrete floor can be mopped, towel dried, or the water can be pushed to the floor drain. The remaining dampness will dry naturally and requires no further immediate action.
4. Run a dehumidifier to dry out the basement further. Just make sure that you are dehumidifying the basement exclusively and not the whole house.
 5. Find out the root cause of the basement leak and get the problem fixed.
 6. Replace mouldy drywall and wood framing, as required.

How To Deal With Major Problems

When faced with significant water in your basement the top two priorities are:

1. Protecting your valuables and furnishings from further water damage; and
2. Isolating the cause of the basement leak as your next actions will be dictated by the root cause of the leak.

Caution: Calling your insurance company to sort out the mess and to receive compensation for your damaged property requires careful consideration for several reasons:

1. It is increasingly likely that your policy does not cover this situation.



We have heard that some insurers will cover plumbing leaks and not basement leaks; there have been recent policy changes by insurers of which you may not be aware; and

2. By alerting your insurance company that you have a problem you may find that they will refuse to renew your policy until you have proven to them that your problem has been rectified. (Imagine if \$25,000 of basement waterproofing is required to solve the problem and you can't afford it; now you will have the additional problem of being uninsurable).

If you do call your insurer they will send a company specializing in disaster restoration services to do whatever is necessary to dry out your basement.

If you are proceeding on your own here are our **recommended steps to take**:

1. Get your furniture and belongings out of the water. Either move your belongings to an unaffected area or raise them off the floor using 2X4 lumber, or whatever it takes to limit the destruction of your property. If cardboard boxes are wet, remove the contents immediately and dry whatever items are wet.
2. Try to figure out the cause of the basement flooding; here are some tips for doing this:
 - a. If it has been raining hard for an extended period of time your wet basement is likely the result of:
 - i. A leaking foundation; or
 - ii. The storm sewer on the street backing up through your floor drain. Check to see if water is coming up through the floor drain; if so, call a plumber immediately.
 - b. If you have had water in your basement on occasion in the past, obviously to a lesser extent, it is likely that you are experiencing yet another basement leak; however, significant flooding in your basement can really only occur if water has an easy path of entry into your basement. Check your basement windows to see if water did not enter due to flooded window wells. If your basement is unfinished, look closely at all the walls to try and identify the point of water entry.
 - c. It is possible that you may have a bona fide plumbing leak. A significant basement flood can really only be attributed to a leaking pressurized water line,



so finding the origin of the leak should be relatively straightforward. If you have a plumbing leak, call a plumber.

- d. If you are unable to establish the cause of the flooding call AquaGuard Injection & Waterproofing® at 1.888.284.2384.
3. Get the basement and content damage, and water, cleaned up.

The remediation of a flooded basement requires a lot of work and specialized equipment. If you are not working with your insurance company we recommend that you immediately contact a company offering disaster restoration services. You must realize that these companies will likely be very busy as you are probably one of many people experiencing such problems, particularly during heavy rains or after a significant spring thaw.