

Water Damage: First 10 Minutes

Move quickly, stay safe, and create a clear record before cleanup changes the scene.



Safety first. Leave the area and call emergency services or a qualified professional if there is standing water near electricity, sewage contamination, a sagging ceiling, fire, gas, or structural danger. Do not enter an unsafe space.

1

☐ Stop the source

Turn off the fixture valve or main water supply if you can do so safely. For storm or roof entry, contain water without entering a hazardous area.

Main shutoff location: _____

2

☐ Document before moving items

Take a slow video walkthrough, then wide and close photos of the source, water path, rooms, and damaged property.

Include model or serial labels when relevant.

3

☐ Protect property; do not discard it

Move valuables to a dry area. Keep damaged items available for inspection unless they create a safety or sanitation risk.

Photograph and list anything that must be discarded.

4

☐ Begin safe mitigation

Use towels, a mop, airflow, or a dehumidifier as conditions allow. Avoid outlets, appliances, and powered equipment near standing water.

Useful gear: wet/dry vacuum, moisture meter, dehumidifier.

5

☐ Report the loss and keep notes

Contact your insurer promptly. Ask what immediate steps are required, whether vendors must be approved, and what records to keep. Save receipts, names, dates, and times.

Claim number: _____ Contact: _____ Next follow-up: _____

A clear way to report it

“I stopped the source, documented the damage with photos and video, and began safe mitigation. What is my claim number, and what do you need from me next?”

Date/time reported: _____

Avoid these mistakes

- Waiting to document the scene.
- Discarding items before photos and an inventory.
- Starting major permanent repairs before confirming next steps.