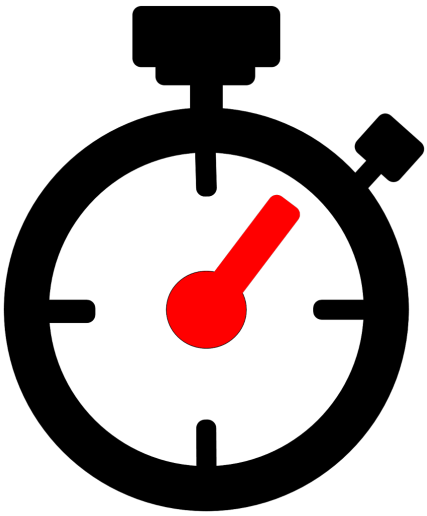
THE 24HR TECH



Step-by-Step Manual to Increase Mitigation Profits and Reduce Training Time to Just

ONE DAY!

2ND EDITION

Andrew McCabe

Licensed Adjuster and Xactimate Professional

THE 24HR TECH

The Step-by-Step Manual to Increase Profits, Decrease Training Time and Systemize Your Mitigation Process

IN ONE DAY

Second Edition: Revised and Updated

Andrew McCabe

Licensed Adjuster and Xactimate Professional

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24HR TECH INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the World of Restoration.

Insured losses in the U.S. exceed $350 billion every year. To serve this gigantic market there are over ten-thousand "restoration" contractors in the United States alone. Each has its own unique approach to claims; each operates in a different region with varying weather and loss patterns. There are multi-million dollar operations and mom & pop shops all vying for their own piece of the Restoration pie.

And while each is different, they nearly all have one thing in common: the Water Technician. The water tech is the front line of every restoration company. Almost every restoration contractor you'll encounter started out with one guy (or gal), in a van, sucking water out of someone's basement in the middle of the night.

That's how I got started. Long before I learned what a "peril" was, or how to tell Berber from cut pile, I was learning how to carry air movers and cut straight lines in carpet. I also learned that there are those that are great under pressure, and those that need hugs (customers and fellow employees alike). I learned that I really enjoyed helping people in need, and coming to the rescue.

Over the years, technology has changed a lot. The pace of projects has changed too. But one thing has stayed the same: everything starts with the Water Tech.

You. It all starts with you.

Whether your employer knows it or not (and let's hope they do), everything good that happens at your company (especially profits) begins with whether or not you do your job right. I'm going to go out on a limb and say the fact that they gave you this training means that your boss knows I'm right. That's why you're reading this; so you can become the best water tech you can be, and fast.

Let's get started, shall we?

Why a Second Edition?

Didn't I just get done saying that things change fast in this industry?

Since I wrote the first edition of this book there have been some major changes to the IICRC S500 Standard which is the guidelines that most professional mitigation and restoration contractors abide by.

The most pertinent differences are in the definitions of the various Classifications of water losses. These definitions have been updated in the documents that accompany this manual.

The new S500 also changed how air mover calculations are performed. Namely, it defined an actual calculation for the recommended number of air movers according to classification of loss.

The main reason for this Second Edition is that hundreds of folks just like you have been using the 24HR TECH system for over a year now. In that time I have made several changes based on their feedback.

Thanks to all those hard working techs across the country, the 24HR TECH system continues to evolve into the most effective tool in your van.

Throughout this edition I will point out the important updates so you'll be sure to be up to date. What do you say we get started now?

The MITIGATION CHECKLIST
How to Use the 20 Steps

Download the latest Mitigation Packet here for free: www.The24HourTech.com/packet

Keep several copies of this packet in your van at all times.

Print out the packet now, and lay it out in front of you. You should have seven pages, starting with the MITIGATION CHECKLIST. It may look like a lot of information, I know. Don't worry, it was created specifically with you in mind. We'll walk through it together, one step at a time.

Over the years I was constantly challenged by two things: insurance company reporting requirements, and a constant inflow of brand new technicians. Believe it or not, it's tough to keep good water technicians. In case you don't know already, this isn't exactly glamorous work.

We work odd hours in filthy conditions. We come home stinky and have to get up the next morning ready to do it again. And the pay for new water techs isn't always great either. I was constantly training a new recruit and had to find ways to get them up to speed in less time.

At the same time, I had to make sure the paperwork and documentation was keeping up with insurance adjusters' needs. Enter the 20 Steps.

Take another look at the MITIGATION CHECKLIST. You will notice five distinct sections:

1. BEGIN
2. MITIGATION
3. PREPARATION
4. DEMOLITION
5. DRYING

Notice how each section is a different shade. One does not flow into the other; it stops and then another begins. This is intentionally designed so you can't get ahead of yourself. You must work the system and **trust the process.**

We get paid for efficiency – not speed.

Each section is numbered. This may sound silly, but follow the numbers. There are no extra points awarded for getting done fast, or doing steps out of order.

In each section you will notice boxes labeled for Initials. As you finish each step, initial the box before moving to the next step. If a second tech is asked to perform a given task, *their* initials go in the box when it's done.

New for 2nd Edition

I'm seeing a lot of techs simply checking off these boxes. This is NOT OK. Your initials indicate your ownership of this task, and this project. Take pride in that and sign your work.

Next, look for the initials of the other pages in the packet. They'll be inside brackets like **[JI]** and **[DR].** These are clues referencing which pages you are to use for certain tasks. The first you'll see is Step 2: Fill out **Job Information [JI].** That means that you should turn to the Job Information sheet which will be labeled with a **[JI].**

Stop me if I'm getting ahead of you.

I know you're getting the point by now: this system was created to simplify your job and make it easy to stay on track. No more guessing what comes next, or reinventing the wheel every time out.

This system is best learned on the job, but naturally you'll be reading this in *preparation* for going out to the job site. You will find it helpful to print out the Mitigation Checklist and fill it out as you go through this training. Use the room you're in right now as your test case and get your trusty tape measure ready.

What do you say we get down to work?

Let's start out with Tip #1: if you see a blank, fill it in.

That means at the top of the **MITIGATION CHECKLIST**, fill in the Job Name, Date, Time, Technician, and Phone. It won't be filled out for you. It is important that when you begin a new job, each page gets labeled, by you, for the job you're on.

Go ahead, do it right now.

It's likely that the technician that fills out this package will not be the same person creating the Xactimate billing. It is important the Technician and Phone number is filled out. That way the estimator knows who to call if they have any questions.

Later on in the process, you may find blanks in forms that are unused. Putting a "/" or "N/A", tells the estimator that you completed the form in its entirety, and didn't "accidentally" skip a step.

Tip #2: Don't fill out pages until you get there.

As you get to each new page in the 20 Steps, fill out the Job Name, Date, Time, Technician and Phone. The Time and Technician are the important parts, because it gives managers an idea of the progress of work and does a better job of telling the story of each project. If certain tasks were performed after hours, for example, they may be charged at a higher rate.

The more times you use The 24 Hour Tech system, the more sense it will make. Soon it will flow naturally and become habitual. For now, let's take it one section at a time.

SECTION ONE:
BEGIN

Introductions

The old saying, "You never get a second chance to make a first impression," is especially true in the case of disasters.

And so it becomes very important to start every project off "on the right foot."

In the restoration world, we deal with people under unusual stress. Their homes and businesses have been damaged or destroyed, and their lives have been disrupted in an unexpected way. We work in these environments every day, and we become accustomed to viewing things in a very clinical or detached way.

We need to remember, even though this may be the tenth flooded home we've been in this week, it's the *first* time our client has had their home torn apart; first by water and then by a mitigation crew. There are many emotions that people experience when their homes, businesses and *lives* are interrupted suddenly. I believe we don't give our clients enough credit for how valiantly most of them respond under the circumstances.

It will help us to take a brief moment before every emergency response to look at the situation through our client's eyes. They have just had something happen that they had no way of anticipating. They are in uncharted territory as far as their own experience. And they've asked strangers (us) to come into their homes to help in ways they don't yet understand.

Pause Then Listen

We work in a fast-paced and often relentlessly busy environment. And when pipes freeze, they freeze EVERYWHERE. Rarely does Mother Nature choose just one or two houses to strike. She prefers entire neighborhoods, or towns, or countries.

We go from wondering how we'll fill the work schedule tomorrow, to wondering how we're going to make it through the week without totally falling apart.

There is a tendency when we arrive on a jobsite to begin thinking about how we're going to handle the next one. This attitude will show in our actions. Our clients will perceive that we don't really care about their personal situation, or that we're rushing their job in order to move to the next one. This is *not* a good thing.

This is the time to consciously take a **pause.** We need to actively break ourselves from the "go, go, go" mentality, and become more present in the moment.

WHY are you here? WHAT do you intend to do?

These words were placed at the top of our checklist for good reason. It is important that we take a couple moments to pause in our process and realign our intentions for the task at hand. The first pause should take place before we step out of the truck.

Go ahead and practice this step right now, wherever you are. Ask a few questions:

1. **How do I look? Am I dirty and smelly? Is my shirt tucked in?**

Your first impression starts before you say a word. What would you think if you saw yourself at the front door?

2. **Why am I here?**

The "right" answer is "I am here to help someone in need of my expertise and understanding."

The "wrong" answer would be "because my boss told me to show up. It's my job." If you're in this business for the aycheck I'm here to tell you there are easier ways to make money.

And if your company culture isn't one of service and kindness, I suggest you put this book down and go home. Then find me on LinkedIn and we'll find you a more supportive employer.

3. **What do I intend to do?**

"Listen to the needs of my client and provide efficient and professional mitigation *service*," is a wonderful stating point, don't you think?

Now we are ready to meet our client in the right frame of mind – a *service* mindset which will guide us through the next twenty steps (and the rest of our careers.)

Next we walk to the front door, lay down our clean walk-off mat, and confidently knock on the door. When our client answers the door, hand them your business card and state the intentions we just rehearsed. Ask them how we can help, then PAUSE for the second time.

Pause and **listen** to what our client has to say. Nine times out of ten, our client will tell us exactly what their fears and concerns are within the first five minutes. Take the time, right on the front steps, to understand your client. *This* is where the first impression is made, and where the tone is set for the entire project.

Keep in mind that our company may be working with this person for the next several months. It is not just the work tonight that will be affected by our attitudes and intentions. Our project managers, estimators and adjuster partners will know whether or not the stage was properly set for success by our actions **RIGHT NOW**.

Just read the reviews that your company receives. Go ahead, Google it. How many times do project managers or adjusters get mentioned by name? The fact is that customers deal with so many different people throughout the course of mitigation and reconstruction that they lose track of who is who.

What they ***do*** remember is ***how*** they were treated by those who were first on scene: us. Many times the lead tech gets called out by name in reviews and online surveys, even though they were involved in the claim only at the beginning. Clients remember how they felt scared and uncertain, and how "Jessica was so understanding and helpful." You may have only been in their lives for a couple of hours, but they will remember you long after you've left.

Make the right impression the first time, and you'll have set up your entire project, and company, for success.

Maybe you should take a pause right now and let that sink in. I'll wait…

1. Photos – RISK and SOURCE

The first things that many insurance programs ask for is pictures of the Risk and the Source. Many adjusters and claims handlers can't even proceed with their claim processing until they have them in their files. That is why they are the first two photos we take before anything else happens.

Notice the camera symbol  with the number "1" in the center? This serves to remind us that this is the first of ***five*** times we'll need to have our camera out to take pictures. Every picture is a vital part of documenting your file in order to get paid.

The **"RISK"** photo is a picture of the home or business. This photo is ultimately sent to the insurance agent and the underwriting department of the insurance carrier. It is used to gauge the existing condition of the building overall and determine whether the insurance company & agent has properly set the level of risk and policy premium charged to cover the property.

A great Risk photo will include a visible portion of roof and siding, as well as the address. When in doubt, make sure you get at least the front door and address in your shot.

The "Source" photo is the source of the damage. It can be the broken pipe, the malfunctioning appliance, or the broken or missing shingles. Usually, this is the first place your client will take you: straight to the cause.

Let them guide you. This is their way of opening their space to you. Follow their lead and let them do most of the talking. Once you reach the "scene of the crime" and they are given the opportunity to tell the story, you can start to help them solve their problem.

Tip #3: if the "SOURCE" is a broken pipe, SAVE THE PIPE!

The adjuster will want to take it for potential subrogation purposes. If the client wants to hold onto it, be sure to tell them NOT to throw it away. The same applies to a faulty appliance, or hose: keep it for the insurance adjuster.

Mark your initials in the first box and move on to Step Two.

2. Fill Out Job Information [JI]

The Job Information Sheet is an opportunity for us to ask our client for help.

Everyone likes to feel useful. Find a place to sit down and ask them if they'd help you with some paperwork. This will help take their minds off the chaos around them and let them know you are thorough. It also sends the signal that they are to be part of the solution going forward.

Don't rush through or try to start giving instructions to your crew during this process. **Never "multi-task".** You are laying the foundation for your documentation file. Accuracy and completeness helps the entire project flow smoother.

Your job is to get as much information as you can on Day One. If there are things that they don't know, no problem, a lot of people don't know their policy number or even agent's name (do you?). Make sure you get an email address and get your client to commit to send you any missing information as soon as they get it.

Often times they won't have a claim number yet, or know who their adjuster is. This information is vital for the office staff and estimators. The sooner you, as a company, can start the conversation with the insurance company, the better. Your client needs to understand the importance of getting information to the right people promptly.

Tip #4: A great Job Information sheet has everything filled out.

If there are items that don't apply, a simple "N/A" communicates to your office staff that you took the time to fill the form out to the best of your abilities. It also sets you up for the most important part of Section One: the Contract.

Mark your initials in box #2 to indicate that you have completed the Job Information sheet with the help of your client.

3. Contract/Work Authorization

The difference between a prospect and a client is a written understanding; a contract. Up until this point we have actually been dealing with a prospect. The owner could ask us to leave right now and there would be very little we could do about it.

Getting a signed contract is the "Go, No Go" point of every project. If they seem hesitant, or express that they "need to think about it", that is our cue to wish them luck and leave.

Tip #5: WE DO NOT PERFORM WORK WITHOUT A CONTRACT

No exceptions. In today's litigious world, it is too dangerous to operate outside of a written agreement between all parties. Most states require "Right to Lien" notices to be signed. Most law suites start out with "show me the contract."

I don't want to scare anyone, but I've seen too many times when a contractor is asked to "just get started," only to regret doing anything because the owner had a change of heart.

Doing work without a signed contract removes all protections for you. And it almost guarantees a lengthy collections process. **Just don't do it**. Be "OK" with packing up and going to the next job if this prospect does not want to sign your contract or work authorization.

Your boss will understand, believe me.

Tip #6: Only actual property owners or authorized parties can sign contracts.

Renters don't have legal standing (authorization) to sign on behalf of landlords. And landlords are legally obligated to give notice to renters for access in all but the most extreme cases.

I have personally lost thousands of dollars because the person who signed my authorization had no legal standing to do so. And despite a lengthy court battle, I still lost. This is not a lesson you want to learn the hard way.

Initial box #3 indicating that you now have a signed contract to proceed with work.

SECTION TWO:
MITIGATION

4. Risk Assessment and Daily Report [DR]

Welcome to the Daily Report. This document will save your bacon if you use it correctly. (And who here doesn't like bacon?) Think of the **Daily Report** as your job diary. Everything you ***do*** should be written here if there isn't another place for it.

You will come back to this document several times throughout your initial site visit and emergency response. For step Four, the important information is the Risk Assessment. Take the time to observe the situation with an eye for potential hazards.

Category 3 (sewer) water requires a substantial amount of preparation and precaution. Cross contamination of potentially contagious materials is your primary concern. You must quickly assess what areas are "affected" and which are to be protected from contamination.

Consider exit routes, lay down tarps and masking where needed, and begin to think about demolition. Remember, porous materials like carpet, pad and drywall cannot be adequately sanitized once exposed to Category 3 water.

Fill out the top portion of the **[DR]** and write down your first impressions of the job site and client.

This is a good time to jot down things like, "*Cat will try to get out. Make sure to close all doors*," or "*Client is very concerned about large china cabinet in living room*."

Noting things like this will help tomorrow's crew stay in your clients' good graces.

5. Start Room Notes Sheet [RN]

This will be your first chance to get a full scope of potential damages. Let your client know that you need to see every room that is connected with the loss and give them fair warning on where you are going. Remember, this is their space, and we need to be constantly aware of the disturbance they are experiencing.

Take out the Room Notes **[RN]** sheets. You'll notice that there are three rooms per sheet. You're also probably saying, "Don't most buildings have more than three rooms?" Yes, they do. You will need several copies of the Room Notes [RN] for your van files.

As you enter each room, take mental note of how they connect to other rooms. Look for signs of water damage and start to think about what contents (furniture) will need to be moved or protected.

For *this* step, all you need is a room *name* and *dimensions*.

Tip #7: Don't take the time to calculate cubic footage at this step.

There are two areas which you don't need to measure right now: the Attic and Crawl Space. Put these rooms down, if they exist ***and*** are likely "affected". We'll address them later.

When you've named and measured each room, head back to the Checklist and mark your initials on Step 5. And keep the **[RN]** handy for the next step.

6. Room Photos

I know, I know. You just got done walking the entire building and now you're being asked to do it again.

Tip #8: Steps 5&6 can be done at the same time.

More often than not, there is a second technician on site. It is perfectly acceptable to have one person measure and label rooms while another takes pictures.

Just be sure you label the rooms FIRST, before taking pictures. You'll learn why in a couple paragraphs.

Tip #9: It is impossible to take too many pictures.

Seriously. Impossible. There was once a time when there were no digital cameras. We had to be thoughtful about our picture taking because there was only so much film we could carry. Not so much now. Isn't technology great?

So snap away, just be **intentional**. Find a method that works for you and do it the same every time. Here is the method I teach. It ensures my estimators won't be blowing up my phone with questions.

You can watch a video here: http://www.claimsdelegates.com/photos

1. Take a picture of the [**RN**] sheet with the Room Name

Yes, take a picture of the Room Notes sheet with the Room Name of the room that you are about to enter. This tells the office staff that the pictures after THIS ONE will all be for THIS ROOM. They will know that the next room on your "camera roll" will start with a picture of the [**RN**] again.

2. Door/Entry – take a picture from outside the room, facing in.
3. Corner One – pick a corner to start with. Try to get as far into the corner as possible.
    - Take a set of pictures from Left to Right – 1,2,3,4 (panorama mode works well too)
    - Take pictures looing Up (ceiling), then Down (floor)
4. Move to Corner Two – pick a corner that gives the best view of the room. Take two more sets of photos.
    - Left to Right – 1,2,3,4
    - Up, then Down

How many pictures is that? I count 13. Some rooms may not require four pictures to get a full 360°, just use what works. If you've got a smartphone, I've been using the panorama function with great success.

Once you've got the room pictures, it's a good idea to look for things that stand out. A table with a broken leg or scratched top is what we call a "pre-existing condition". That's also known as "We didn't do that." Take pictures of stains, scratches, broken items and ALL contents.

Stainless appliances, TV's and even rugs are all things that are good to document their "pre-existing condition". Leave no doubt about how you found things.

Tip #10: Use a Cloud-based Storage System

Until the 24HR TECH App comes out (hopefully in late 2016), I highly recommend setting up either a Google Drive or DropBox account for your pictures. You can give your entire company access as well as vendors who may need to see your pictures.

Today's smartphones can quickly and easily be set up to automatically upload all photos to a shared folder so the office staff can start working the file before the tech even gets back to the shop.

Claims Delegates (www.ClaimsDelegates.com) sets up a Google Drive folder for every Xactimate estimate they write, in order to give their clients an easy way to share their files no matter what part of the country they happen to be in.

Your initials on Step 6 means that you finally get to DO SOMETHING! Mitigation time!

7. Mitigation

Congratulations! You've finally arrived at a step where you get to actually *do something.*

But wait, before you start pulling equipment out of the truck, read the instructions. The only things you're allowed to do right now are: stop the leak (or stop the water from coming in), extract water, protect property from further damage and move contents out of harm's way.

Tip #11: Saturated materials cannot absorb more water.

Once something has absorbed as much water as it can hold, it does not matter if it continues to get wet. Use that knowledge to help you triage your efforts. Look for items and materials that can be saved before spending effort on things that are already a lost cause.

Tip #12: Start at the Source

When faced with a major flood or water leak, our natural inclination is to go where the most water is and start extraction. It took me years to break the habit. You don't have years, so let's make a better habit.

Stop reacting. Think about where the water came from and start at the source. This is especially helpful in multi-level water losses. If you start extraction at the ground level, you will be spending more time extracting because as you work, there is water still migrating down through the structure.

It will continue to drip on your head and frustrate your efforts.

Instead, start at the source and work your way down. Extract as much as possible up top, and that will stop the water from continuing to follow gravity.

Tip #13: Your *primary* purpose is to Dry Buildings as quickly as possible.

The way to achieve your primary purpose is to get as much as the "easy water" up and out as quickly as possible. That's what extraction is: getting the "easy water." What's left is the "bound water."

The only way to eliminate the "bound" water is to either A)Tear out the wet material or B)Actively dry the wet material. We'll get to that shortly.

At this point, get as much extraction happening as possible. If you've got a truck-mounted system *and* a portable extractor, get them both running. If you've only got one extractor, but have two or more techs on site, move on to the next step while extraction continues.

This is also a great time for weighted extraction. If you don't own a Water Claw, now is the time to buy one.

SECTION THREE:
PREPARE THE DRYING SYSTEM

8. Atmospheric Readings [RDC]

Take out the Record of Drying Conditions **[RDC]** and turn it so you can read it. We're now getting to the more "technical" section of the 20 Steps. Don't worry, as with everything else in the package, it was designed for easy and simple implementation. Write your name and the time at the top.

Documentation is the most important part of your work. Moisture readings over the course of the project can mean the difference between getting paid by an insurance company and having to fight over every line item of your invoice. The key to proper documentation of atmospheric readings is being consistent in the way you take your readings.

Use the same meter every time. Some companies have different brands of meters because they were purchased at different times. Whether you use a Delmhorst all-in-one, or a simple hygro-pen, make sure you use the same one every time. Meters have varying margins of error and it's important to get as consistent readings as possible.

Second Edition Note

Since the publication of the first edition of this manual, I recorded a video talking about taking pictures of moisture readings. My main point was to have folks STOP taking pictures of their meters because they are never needed (in my experience). Boy did I make a stir!

The interwebs and my YouTube channel blew up with folks telling me how important it is to take pictures of your meter and readings. So I leave it up to you; if you want to take pictures of your moisture meter, go right ahead. Or you can ask your manager why they prefer.

Write the date and time in the left-hand spaces provided. Take your meter outside and turn it on. Hygrometers take time to acclimate to each micro-environment within a building; you won't get an instant reading. Watch the readout and wait for it to "settle" on a reading.

Air flow across the sensor will help the acclimation process (no, do *not* breath on the sensor). Swinging the sensor in your hand will accomplish this just fine. Once the readout stops changing, write the RH and Temp in the "**Outside Air**" boxes. Do not worry about GPP unless your meter automatically calculates it. The estimator will calculate it otherwise.

Unaffected: this is an area of the home or business that hasn't suffered direct water damage. In severe cases, there may not be an "unaffected" area.

Perform the same activity that you just did for the "outside". Mark down the Temp and RH.

Affected: any area that has direct water damage. There are three spaces for "affected" areas on the RDC, you are only required to record one. If you plan to have more than one "drying chamber", i.e. one upstairs and one downstairs, you'll need to track more than one "affected" area on the RDC.

Tip #14: Take interior moisture readings in the most wet places.

This helps paint a worst-case picture for the adjuster and enables you to concentrate your drying efforts in the most affected areas.

Take measurements from the same place every time, and make sure that place has the highest potential moisture. Remember, our primary purpose is to dry buildings fast. That means we want to measure and track the wettest areas to ensure our drying system is working.

Think about where you are likely to pick up the most moisture, set your sensor down, and leave it for two full minutes. For example, lay the meter on the wet carpet and walk away. In the future you will start Step 9 (**Moisture Map**) while you are getting atmospherics, in order to be more efficient.

When you've recorded three measurements, Outside, Unaffected and Affected, you're ready to begin the moisture map. Put your initials next to the [**RDC**] box.

9. Moisture Map / Diagram + Crawl Space Inspection [FP]

This step tends create the most anxiety among new water techs. It also has a tendency to take up a lot of time unnecessarily. If taught correctly, and practiced often, creating a Moisture Map can become easy and efficient.

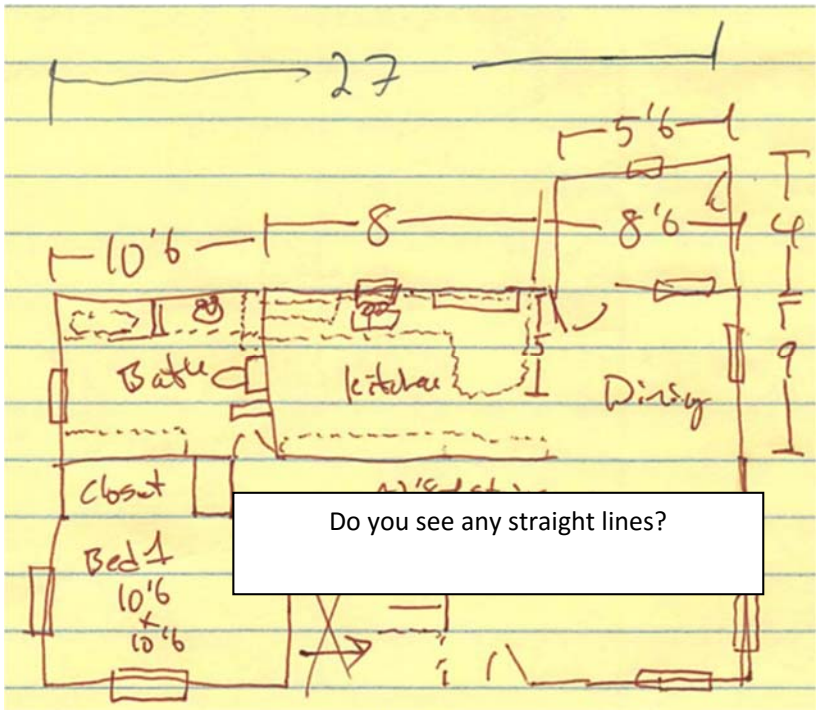
A solid Sketch can also mean the difference between ultimately getting paid by an insurance company and your boss being upset because he had to "give back" equipment rental days. Insurance adjusters and TPAs are becoming increasingly wise to the ways of mitigation. If your paperwork doesn't support your invoice, you'll find yourself "discounting" your bills more often than not.

Take out the Floor Plan [FP], fill out the top, and let's get started.

Tip #15: The moisture map does not need to be neat, only legible.

I've watched many new techs spend an hour writing a diagram of a three bedroom house. I've seen them use rulers for straight lines and even use white-out! Please, don't use white-out. This is a sketch, to be used for reference only. Don't get carried away with how straight your lines are.

Below is an example of a sketch I did recently:



The key components to a great sketch are:

- General concept of room shapes and how they connect to each other.
- Clearly labeled rooms
- Doors (swings don't matter) and window openings (sizes don't matter)

- Rough idea of cabinets and fixtures (like toilets, tubs & sinks)

That's it. You don't even have to use your tape measure! Why? Because you've already got the room measurements on the **Room Notes [RN].** Simply find the room and write the measurements on your **Floor Plan [FP].**

What happens when you encounter a large loss or commercial building? Simply add more sheets. As you can see from my example, it's not vital what kind of paper the sketch is done on. It is very common on bigger losses to use multiple sketches to accommodate multiple floors or different sections of a building.

You will not take any actual **moisture points** during this step. You *will*, however, be using your moisture meter and probes to investigate the full extent of water damage and migration.

If you have an infrared camera at your company, it can help speed up the process. Before you can start Step 10, you have to be confident that you know everywhere the water went, and where it might be trapped.

This is also the time for the **Attic/Crawl Space Inspection**. Up until this point you've been able to stay relatively clean and dry. That time is over, it's time to suit up and get down to business. Water (usually) follows gravity and the paths of least resistance to get to the ground. Heating ducts make great highways for water to flow.

Attics and crawl spaces are the most commonly missed areas of bound water because no one wants to go into them. Don't be that company. You don't want to be called onto the carpet by an adjuster performing a re-inspection, who just discovered twenty feet of soaking wet flex ducting in the crawl space.

If you are by yourself, you'll have to come out and then back into the attic/crawl in order to finish the project – assuming there is water damage. If you have a partner, the person in the attic/crawl stays and skips to Step 13 (Demolition). Remove any wet insulation, cut & drain water logged ducting, pull back vapor barrier to allow for drainage.

The lucky "upstairs" partner can move on to the next step, after signing their initials next to [**FP**].

10. Develop Drying Strategy + Perform Calculations [DC]

Pull out the Dehumidifier Calculator [**DC**] and fill out the top portion as usual.

As you explored the building and developed your Sketch, you should have developed a good idea of the full extent of the damages. Now is the time to put together your plan of action.

The Drying Strategy is simply this:

1. What materials are to be removed?
2. What materials are to be dried?
3. How much equipment will it take to do so?

We'll start with the equipment question. You'll notice at the top left side of the [**DC**] an area labeled "Room Notes". Transcribe the room names from the [**RN**] sheets into this table. Next, copy the cubic footage calculations for each room. Then add the cubic footage into the "Total" box.

Tip #16: Fill out a separate [DC] for each drying chamber.

A drying chamber is an affected area that is separated from the rest of the structure either by closing a door or setting up containment/plastic. A smaller chamber means less cubic footage to dry, which equals less drying equipment needed.

Once you total the cubic footage, you must decide which type of dehumidifier you plan on using. I'm not going to give a lesson on dehu types here. That will be up to your peers and trainers to teach you. I *will* say that the vast majority of restoration contractors in the residential market are using some kind of LGR (Low-Grain Refrigerant) dehumidifier.

Follow the black line and carry your cubic feet total down to the next set of tables. You'll see a calculation. Since we just decided that most contractors use LGRs, put your number in the top row.

Now you have to determine which CLASS of water damage you're dealing with. Classes of water losses are determined by the amount of anticipated evaporation there will be. The more evaporation, the more equipment will be needed to remove that moisture from the air.

New for Second Edition

In mid-2015 the IICRC made the first major revision of the S500 in several years. Part of the changes deals with redefining the classifications of Water Losses. The new definitions provide a clearer way to define Classes, yet are more complicated to figure out.

Water Loss Classifications are now based the amount of "affected porous materials." That means that when you are developing your drying strategy it is important to consider only those materials that are wet and which you intend to leave in place for drying.

Porous materials are things like wood, drywall and carpet. Non-porous materials are things like metal studs and concrete. I know that concrete is technically porous, but for our purposes we don't consider wet concrete in our calculation unless we think there is a high risk of secondary damage because the concrete will release a large amount of water.

If you were used to the old definitions of Water Classes, these new definitions actually calculate out to be very close. Take a minute to read all four definitions.

Class 1: less than 5% of porous material affected. That's not a lot of material. Think about a water damage in a bedroom that only affected the floor. It doesn't happen often, but let's say that the walls and baseboards are dry.

If the carpet is wet, the underlayment is likely wet. Even when you pull the wet pad, the percentage of "affected" (wet) porous materials is 16% (assuming drywall on walls and ceiling. 4 walls + 1 ceiling + 1 floor = 6 surfaces of roughly equal size. 1 surface (floor) devided by 6 equals 16%).

As you can see, only the most minor water damaged losses would be considered Class 1.

Now before you consider the rest of the Water Classifications, take a look at the Class Factors. There are only two to choose from; 50 or 40 (or 2 & 3 if you're using dessicants). There is no factor difference between Class 2 and Class 4 water losses. So unless more than 40% of the room is affected, you're using a Class Factor of 50 (or 2). I'm sure you can take a good guess and get close.

When in doubt, use Class 2 and just move forward. Seriously, don't get hung up here.

According to the table in the bottom right corner of the [DC], the Class Factor for a Class 2 loss, using LGRs is 50. Put the number 50 back in your table where it says LGR Class Factor. Look, I even shaded it for you.

Now do the math. I'm going to use some numbers out of thin air, you use what you came up with while measuring the room you're in. Let's say you had 1,000 square feet in your drying chamber. That's most of a house. Assuming ten-foot ceilings, your calculation would look like this:

Total Cubic Feet		LGR CLASS FACTOR		Pints Needed
10,000	÷	**50**	=	200

As you can see, in order to properly "balance" your drying system, you will need to use enough equipment to remove *at least* 200 pints per day (PPD). How many LGRs is that? This is the part where you get to know your equipment.

What type(s) of dehumidifiers do you stock in your van? You should know the AHAM rating of each piece of equipment and be able to quickly write down how many pints per day each is capable of removing. I've put a couple of the most frequently used dehumidifiers in the table already.

You can use any combination of dehu sizes in order to meet your Total Minimum PPD. Just make sure you use enough. I've found when techs don't perform a dehu calculation on every job, they usually don't use enough equipment. That's also why jobs which should take three to four days to dry, end up taking a week.

Let's say your equipment inventory consists of small Dri-Eaze 1200's and Evolution dehumidifiers. How many will you need to dry this project properly?

Dehumidifier Type	PPD/ CFM	x	# of units	=	Total
1200	65	x	1	=	65
Evolution	70	x	2	=	140
2000	110	x		=	

As you can see, two Evos and one 1200 will exceed our PPD goal of 200 by 5 pints. Not bad. But what if you only had Evolutions? No problem, just use three Evos. Your Actual PPD will be 210 and you're still accomplishing your goal: a balanced drying system.

Tip #17: It is better to EXCEED the calculated PPD than fall short.

You don't want to have to add more dehumidification on days two or three. Adjusters don't like it either.

Remember, most adjusters and TPAs do their own calculations now. Some carriers have a separate "mitigation" claims department whose sole purpose is to reduce mitigation invoices. Be prepared to negotiate, but don't cave in. If you use two LGR 2000's when two Evolutions would have done it, be prepared for the adjuster to ask that you charge for the smaller dehu.

Tip #18: LGRs and Desiccants use two VERY different calculations.

Don't try to mix both types of dehumidifiers and think that the math is the same. Instead of PPD, desiccants use a cubic foot per minute (CFM) calculation. This is further complicated by the fact that the "standard" calculation for desiccant moisture load is figured in air changes per hour (ACH).

The [DC] will calculate both, but it gets tricky when you're using both LGRs and desiccants on the same job. When you get to that point, give me a call and I'll walk you through the steps: **https://clarity.fm/andrewmccabe**

You are now ready to develop your **Drying Strategy**. Let's get some terminology first:

Supplemental Heat: most LGRs do not operate below 50°F. If there is no other heat source (broken furnace) it will probably be a good idea to either plan on getting the furnace fixed, or to bring in supplemental heating to keep the drying chamber above 50°F. Portable propane heaters are not a good choice. Portable 220V electric heaters with thermostats are nice though.

OPEN/CLOSED/HYBRID System: An OPEN drying system uses outside air to assist the process. OPEN systems work in places like Phoenix Arizona, because the outside air is generally very hot and dry. OPEN systems use less active dehumidification and more air movement.

CLOSED drying systems are *closed-off* from the outside air. There is little air exchange between the inside and outside of the drying chamber. Most drying systems are the CLOSED variety.

HYBRID drying systems are exactly what the name implies: a hybrid of OPEN and CLOSED systems. These systems usually involve some kind of exterior-based heat exchange system with filtration. The simplest HYBRID systems however, might consist of air movers combined with a scheduled "exhausting" or "burping" of the building. Simply put, evaporating moisture into the inside air, then opening doors and windows to "exhaust" wet air and bring in "fresh" air.

Tip #19: There's not a lot of equipment rental ($) in OPEN or simple HYBRID systems.

I'm just sayin'.

Specialty Drying Situation: "Specialty" situations are those in which water has become "bound" in materials that it will be difficult to remove quickly. Examples are granite tile substrate (floors), exotic hardwoods and lathe & plaster applications. These porous materials quickly absorb water during flooding/overflowing situations, and then hold that water for a long time.

Additional heat and longer dry times are needed in these situations. The vastly lower grain depression capability of desiccant dehumidifiers may need to be brought into play. Either way, the owner AND adjuster need to understand that additional time and cost is likely to be incurred.

It is important for you, at the water expert, to be able to gauge whether the additional cost is justified. Just because the concrete garage floor is wet, does NOT mean that you need to spend two weeks drying it. What is the potential for further damage if it stays wet for a while?

On the other hand, if the granite tile floor and backer board is wet, it may be more economical (and less disruptive to the client) to bring in additional equipment instead of tearing it out.

You will have to make the call whether to tear out a material, try to dry it, or just let it be.

Now that you've finished the [**DC**], discuss your strategy with your teammates, write it down, put your initials in the box and move to the next step.

11. Check in with the Owner

I bet you forgot who was in charge, didn't you? Well here's your reminder: you are still working in someone else's space. The building owner always has final say over what does and does not happen to their property.

Take this opportunity to pause from the frantic "emergency" pace and take your client aside for a moment. You've had a chance to have a real good look around. You've developed a plan of action. Now is your time to get your client to buy into that plan.

Explain your drying strategy. Show them what materials you plan to remove in order to speed the drying process. Explain how much equipment you plan to set, and how long that equipment will be running in their home or business.

Lay it all out there for them to look at, and ask if they have any questions or concerns. Then LISTEN.

Tip #20: The #1 customer complaint in restoration is that "they didn't listen or understand my concerns".

Let's face it, we're all professionals. We handle hundreds of losses a month. We know what we're doing, right? The problem we have is that we get in a hurry and forget that our clients have concerns that don't have anything to do with our next job. If we start looking past them to the next loss, we risk taking our eye off the ball.

Your client may want you to dry a hardwood floor that you *know* will never be as good as new.

So dry it.

They might ask you to dry a tile floor from below, for weeks, instead of tearing out their kitchen.

Dry it.

You may get asked to dry any number of things, and as long as it isn't unlawful or dishonest…

***Just dry it*.**

Now assuming your Drying Strategy didn't just get flipped on its head, mark your initials and move to the next phase.

SECTION FOUR:
DEMOLITION

Congratulations! You've reached the fun part. Time to get dirty!

Wait, not quite yet.

12. Protection

You're about to make a lot of dust. Let's make sure we keep it as "clean" as possible. Put up barriers between "demo" rooms and the rest of the building. Cover contents with plastic. Turn off the heating system (temporarily of course).

Drywall dust is incredibly fine. It will find a way to float anywhere that you haven't put up plastic protection. Keep in mind that these plastic barriers will be coming down when you're done; they don't have to be pretty, just functional.

Cover and protect woodwork, tile, stairs, carpets… everything. Then take pictures of your beautiful protection.

Tip #21: Pictures are your insurance policy for getting paid.

We'll touch on this again in step 15.

New for Second Edition

I've been using the 20-Steps with my clients for nearly two years now. Masking and plastic remain the #1 revenue generator that my contractors are MISSING out on.

The reality is this: your company makes more money when you mask carpet and cabinets than when you place a dehumidifier. Really.

Keep in mind that masking ("Cover and Protect" WTR-PROT) is 25 cents per SQUARE FOOT. If you do it after hours, the price jumps to 33 cents! That means that if you cover a 10x10 area of furniture (which isn't all that big), and take a picture of it (to prove that you did it), you can make your company an extra $25 (or $33 for late night work).

That just happens to be equal to the rental rate of one air mover for one day. Is this getting clear?

Your company doesn't make money for every hour you work. It makes money according to WHAT YOU DO in that hour. Pick up the easy money while you're there.

13. Demolition

Yes, finally! Follow your Drying Strategy and remove water damaged materials.

There are many tips and tricks to "great" demolition; too many to list here. Hopefully you're being helped by an experienced journeyman technician who can show you the ins-&-outs of being a great water tech.

Here are some key elements of "great" demolition:

1. **Straight lines**: drywall and carpet are a lot easier to repair when there are straight lines to butt up to. Use a chalk line (drywall) or metal yard stick (carpet) to mark you cuts.
2. **Minimize damage**: I know, it sounds counter-intuitive. But if you think about doing things in the least intrusive way, your client AND the insurance company will notice. Example: cutting the paint/caulk bead above baseboards will keep the paint from pealing and may save the need to paint the wall.

   OR: Often a bathroom wall will back up against a closet on the other side. If that bathroom has tile on the walls – but is wet, it makes economic sense to cut open the closet wall in order to dry the bathroom wall from the back side.
3. **Keep it clean**: yes, I'm aware that this is demolition. What YOU need to be aware of is that you're still in someone else's space. It can often be helpful to have someone running a shop vac right next to you when doing things like cutting/drilling drywall.

   If you have a KETT saw, it makes drywall demo and cleanup an easy one-step process.

Tip #22: If a material may not be dry four days from now, think seriously about removing it NOW.

When you've taken all your aggressions out on this poor person's house, take a deep breath, and take pictures of what you just did.

Then sign your initials and get ready for Step 14.

14. Clean Up

You'll be turning on some heavy duty fans in the next section. The last thing you want is to blow drywall dust and debris into unaffected areas.

I know you just set this containment, but you'll be taking most of it down now.

While you're cleaning up the mess you just made, think about your client. In most losses, they are likely to stay put (either in their home or continue with business as best they can). They are going to have to live/work through whatever environment you leave them in.

What kind of impression do you want to leave? Do you want them to see a pile of garbage that you left every time they walk down the hall? Do you want them to pull their coffee cups out of the cupboard and have to wash the dust out before getting their coffee in the morning? I hope not.

The only reminders you want to leave are things like:

- Equipment running with the cords neatly strung in a line and taped down to reduce tripping hazards.
- Rooms and furniture left clean and as accessible as possible.
- **A CLEAN DRIVEWAY**

Don't skimp on this step. You're so close to the end, let's not trip on the finish line. You can do it.

If you've got a helper with you, let them continue the cleanup effort while you continue to the next step. Put your helper's initials in the "Cleanup" box.

15. Document Your Actions

This is the step that you start to actually make money. Everything up to this point was preparation. You see, you can DO a lot of things and look real busy, but if you don't DOCUMENT what you did it's all wasted effort.

The ONLY way to get paid for your hard work is to PROVE that you did it. Documentation is key in insurance claims. If it isn't written down, it's as if it didn't happen.

That's why I've told you to take so many pictures along the way.

This step is also where you have a chance to reach the Holy Grail of mitigation: **The $1,000 Hour**. It's that magical place where, if you've worked efficiently and effectively, you can actually earn your company over $1,000 for every hour you work.

Grab the Room Notes [RN] sheet and let's get to work. First, remember what I said in the beginning?

1. Take your time and don't skip ahead.
2. If you see a blank, fill it in. Check boxes are NOT blanks.

Head to the first room on your list. Before you write anything, let's make sure you understand the CODES. Look at the very bottom where it says, "SHORT CODES". It should look something like this:

SHORT CODES – **W:** ft^2 of **W**alls **F:** ft^2 of **F**loor **C:** ft^2 of **C**eiling **PF/PC:** Perimeter of Floor/Ceiling **LF:** Linear Feet

I did promise that you wouldn't need your tape measure again, didn't I? I'll be keeping that promise at least a little longer.

The Short Codes are there for you to use as shorthand for measurements. You've already got the room dimensions, and your estimator already knows how to use Xactimate short codes. The two combined will save you both a lot of time.

New for Second Edition

Since this manual was first published, the Room Notes form has been improved several times. The major change for this edition is that the activities have been put in a more logical order, according to which steps you likely performed first.

The form has also been changed to make better use of the room measurements you've already taken.

EXTRACTION: So how much extraction did you do in this room? Don't think about it in hard numbers, think about it as "what portion of this room did I extract?" Here's a cheat sheet:

WHAT YOU DID	WHAT YOU CIRCLE	WHAT IT MEANS
"About half the area of the floor"	½	Extracted ½ of the Floor Area

"I extracted less than half of this room"	**¼ or 1/8**	Extracted ¼ of the Floor Area
"This room was completely soaked"	**F**	Extracted All Floor Area
"I didn't extract in this room"	**/ or "--"**	N/A or Did Not Do

That's it! See how easy this is!

Now, the check boxes.

Extraction Type	What it means	Speed	What it's worth
Hard Surface	Hard surface extraction (no carpet)	Very fast	$
Carpet	Extraction from Carpet	Medium	$$
Heavy	Multiple passes required (carpet)	Slow	$$$
Weighted	Using a stand-on tool (Water Claw)	Very Slow	$$$$
"Other" (fill in the blank)	There are other types of riding extractors. Not many people use them.	Very, very slow	$$$$$$

The default extraction used in Xactimate is WTREXT: water extraction from carpet. If you don't mark anything, your estimator will use the default value.

Tip #23: Using weighted extraction is an advanced technique that can both make more money and save time.

With weighted extraction you don't have to pull up carpet, cut seams, and cut out wet pad. You can get enough water out of these materials that they will dry fast using your drying equipment. Not only does it save your back right now, it saves the reconstruction expenses later on. Win-Win!

Anti Microbial:

I use Microban liberally on water losses. It helps prevent mold odor and provides some peace of mind for your client.

New for Second Edition

The Anti-microbial item was moved into the "Extraction" section with the latest revision of the Room Notes, to save space. It also makes more sense to apply it following extraction.

Contents Moved:

How long did it take you to move the furniture into the middle of the room so you could protect it with plastic? Take your best guess and circle the appropriate fraction of an hour.

Listing more than an hour in any given room makes adjusters a bit twitchy – just a word of caution.

Estimators have a few options when it comes to listing content manipulation, so be sure to list any extraordinary time on your daily report. Or at the bottom of the Room Notes.

Cover/Protect:

There is a lot of money to pick up on this one, so don't get lazy. If you were following along, you've already got great pictures of all the protection you used. Now it's time to get paid.

Did you cover the cabinets and counter tops?	"W"or "W/2"
Did you cover furniture that takes up half the room?	"F/2"
Did you use floor masking?	Check "Mask"
Did you build a dust barrier at a doorway?	"Contain"
Did your containment have a zipper?	"Zipper"
See how easy this is?	"Yes, yes I do!"

Trim/Finish: This is a section where you may have to bring out your tape measure again. But just maybe.

"Base" is base molding or baseboard. "PF" or "PF/4" are perfectly good measurements. "CWN" is crown molding and you can also use this for chair railing. Once again, "PC" or some fraction of perimeter measurement is fine.

"Tack" is the tack strip used to attach carpeting. "Case" is also known as casing or door/window trim. This is where you may have to measure. A shortcut I use is to put all door casings at 17 LF. As long as the door is a normal opening, that works just fine. If there is more than one door casing pulled, I use something like "17*2…3".

Drywall Demo: How much drywall did you remove in this room? Take a look at the following table.

WHAT YOU DID	WHAT YOU WRITE	WHAT IT MEANS
"I took out one whole wall"	**W/4**	Removed ¼ of the Wall Area
"We tore out half of that wall"	**W/8** or **W/4/2**	Removed 1/8 of the Wall Area
"I cut the whole room, one foot from the floor"	**Circle 2' and PF**	2' Flood cut of Perimeter of Room
"We dropped half the ceiling"	**C/2**	Remove ½ of the Ceiling Area

This section makes heavy use of the measurements "W" , "C" and "PF".

- "W" equals the total square feet of walls in this room.
- "C" equals the total square feet of ceiling in this room.
- "PF" is the total linear feet fo the perimeter of this room.

With drywall, there is usually a combination of things happening. Don't get overly concerned with precision. Make your best approximation. No one is going to second-guess your calculation as long as it's reasonable.

Notice how we used "2 foot" Flood Cut when we only cut one foot? That's because Xactimate doesn't have a "One Foot" flood cut. If you wanted to be ultra-accurate, you could have used the "PF" calculation by itself without checking the "Flood Cut" box. You'd also be cutting your revenues by 3/4.

In this section you can choose an area (like W or C/2) and a flood cut. For flood cuts, first mark the height of the cut, then the length of the cut (LF).

Insulation:

Where do you usually find insulation? Ceilings, exterior walls and crawl spaces. That means the measurements you'll most likely use are "C", "W/4" and "F". The reason I include the insulation crawl space in the "room" is because it's easier to measure each room than it is to measure the actual crawl.

The amount of insulation removed has a tendency to be similar to the amount of drywall removed. Pay attention and keep it simple.

Floor Demo: What type of floor is in the room? Did you remove it? What did your drying strategy say?

Only mark the flooring type that you ACTUALLY REMOVED. If you lifted the carpet to remove the pad, mark "Pad" and "Float".

"UL" is underlayment. Usually, if you remove wood flooring, you also remove the underlayment. The same goes for vinyl.

"GD" is Glued-Down carpet. There are additional Xactimate line items for removal of glued-down applications.

Cabinets: I don't like having water techs pull cabinets. Let's face it: if we were carpenters we wouldn't be here, right? In the rare occasion that you absolutely *must* pull a cabinet, please be careful and don't be afraid to call for backup.

When listing cabinet removal, it is important to be more precise. That means you *will* need to use a tape measure.

FH	Full height cabinet – floor to ceiling
Lowers	Lower or base cabinetry and vanities
Uppers	Upper or high cabinetry
Toekick	Removal of the toe kick
Drill#	Drilling holes in the toe kick for ventilation – by number of holes drilled.
Counters	LF of counters pulled. Write down the type (laminate, granite, tile…)

Doors: Quite possibly the easiest item on the list. You either removed a door, or didn't. Was it bifold? Check the box.

Appliances/Fixtures: What appliances did you move? Most rooms don't have any of course.

DW	Dishwasher
RF	Refrigerator
RGE	Range – Electric

RGG	Range – Gas
WM	Washing Machine
MW	Microwave
TLT	Toilet – be sure to plug the drain with something
SNK	Sink – usually in conjunction with vanity or cabinet
PSNK	Pedestal Sink

Some companies carry items called "shark bites." They are items that enable you to cap off supply lines. I don't like to pretend that I'm a plumber, so I don't recommend shark bites.

Tip #24: Turn off the water and call a plumber whenever dealing with sinks, dish-washers, washing machines or ice makers.

Believe me, you don't want the kind of liability that comes with a SECOND water loss.

Initial #15 complete. Nicely done. You just made your company a tidy profit. Now for the equipment you were waiting for.

SECTION FIVE:
DRYING

16. Set Drying Equipment

Welcome to the home stretch! You're doing great, and almost done.

There are a lot of opinions and technical definitions of what it takes to set up a drying system. The fact is that drying structures is one part science and two parts art. There are just so many variables to consider that it is very difficult to say with absolute certainty that "this is the one right way" to do it.

That's a good thing. That means you've got leeway to make mistakes and find your own way. Experiment (within reason) and try new things. There's only one thing you must do: document your calculations and track your moisture points.

If things aren't getting dry by day two, you know you need to make some adjustments. That is perfectly acceptable. You'll get better as you go.

Pull out the [DC] and double check how much dehumidification you need. Back in Step 10 we decided that it would be fine to use three Evolution LGRs. Where does it make the most sense to set them up?

Tip #25: Know the amperage of your equipment.

Remember that most household circuits are only 15 amps.

Be sure to spread your dehumidifiers onto separate electrical circuits. The Evolution says it's rated at 5 amps, but when the compressor first kicks on, the amps can spike. If you're using a fully loaded circuit, you'll end up popping a breaker every time the dehu comes out of defrost mode.

Dead circuits don't dry houses very well.

Once all equipment is running, wait a few minutes. Let the dehus get warmed up and cycled through. If breakers start failing, turn your air movers to the lowest settings (if they can), or remove them one-by-one until the circuit holds.

New for Second Edition

Air Mover Placement: The IICRC revised the S500 Drying Standard in late 2015. In my opinion, this represented an unnecessary complication to the drying equipment calculations. And since my opinion doesn't count for much, here's the short of it.

The actual recommended calculations call for dividing the square footage of wet floor by two numbers, and dividing the square footage of wet walls and ceilings by two *different* numbers. This yields a maximum and minimum number of airmovers to be used per room.

That's right: a *range* of airmovers. Not a specific number.

I've read the new calculations a few times now. The bottom line recommendation is much easier to follow: all wet materials should have consistent and adequate airflow on them.

That means evenly space your air movers to ensure that you are actively drying all wet materials in the room.

That's it. If someone wants to show you a "vortex" drying chamber, let them. Each journeyman technician has their own style.

 Take pictures of all equipment in place. Make sure you get the equipment numbers in the shot if you can. Then put your initials in so we all know who took those beautiful shots.

17. Document Specialty Materials and Equipment [RN]

Head back to the Room Notes [**RN**] to jot down the equipment by room. The equipment codes are at the bottom of the page.

The most important parts of listing your equipment is the Type and Number. Something like this will do: "DH004". That tells your estimator that you had LGR number 004 on site, in that particular room, on that date. A more detailed description would be helpful though.

For instance, if you know you're using a 1200, list it as "DH1200-004." Or a 7000ix would be "DH7000-004." Your equipment should all be labeled in multiple places and cataloged at your shop. Those of you who want extra credit, can consult the following table.

Dehu Size	Pints Per Day	Xactimate Code	Example
Standard	Less than 70	WTR-DHM	Dri-Eaz 1200
"L"	70-109 PPD	WTR-DHM>	Dri-Eaz Evolution
"XL"	110-159 PPD	WTR-DHM>>	7000 Xli or LGR2000
"XXL"	160+ PPD	WTR-DHM>>>	Phoenix 270HTx

Integrating the dehu size into your list will help the estimator charge for the appropriately sized piece of equipment: "DHXL-004" would be perfectly acceptable.

List the "Set Date" (Today) for each piece of equipment in each room. Tomorrow, if you remove a fan from a room, mark tomorrow's date in "Pick Up" across from it.

Tip #25: Moving equipment from room to room is expected and normal practice.

Simply mark the "Pick Up" date in the room you're taking it FROM, and write the same piece of equipment in the new room with a new "Set Date."

Anything that doesn't have a space on the Room Notes [**RN**] sheets, needs to be listed on your Daily Report [**DR**].

Tip #26: As you walk from room to room listing your equipment, reach down and touch each one to make sure it is running.

Once you get more than a couple pieces of drying equipment running, it can get quite noisy. Also, with that much air moving around, it can be difficult to discern with our eyes whether an air mover is actually "on". Feeling the vibrations with your hand is a sure sign that things are operating smoothly, and that you haven't lost power.

18. Final Moisture Points

Time to visit the Floor Plan [**FP**] one last time. Walk the job site and think about what you're trying to dry. Your primary function is to dry the building. Do you have enough information to properly track and document the drying process?

When tracking the moisture content of things like wood framing, it is important to find the HIGHEST reading to start out. Use your meter to find the wettest (is that even a word?) portion of framing and use that point on your floor plan.

Check out the key on the bottom of the Floor Plan sheet. You'll see that I suggest using numbers to indicate readings taken on floors and walls, and letters for wall readings. Since most of the demolition is finished, your moisture readings will likely be from exposed framing.

Notice that there are only eight slots in which to take readings. That's to prevent you from going hog wild (and wasting a lot of time). You should have only ONE reading for each type of material you are tracking moisture levels for.

If you're drying wood framing, pick the most affected (wettest) piece of framing you can find. There is no need to track any other framing, unless that particular moisture point reaches the Dry Standard. Then you need to double check that there are no other pockets of moisture in the framing.

Dry Standard:

The Dry Standard is your drying goal. Once you set the standard, that becomes your target moisture level for each particular material you are tracking in this room.

For example: choose a wet point of drywall. Let's call it Point "A". Mark "A" on your map with an arrow pointing to the approximate location where you took your reading.

Next, put an "A" in the top of the column titled "Moisture Points (MP)". Put today's date in the "Date:" column then put your reading in today's date directly below point "A".

Tip #27: Use whatever number your meter uses.

My Protimeter reads on a scale from 0 to 1,000 when in non-invasive mode. And we all know that a "300" is roughly equivalent to 30% moisture content. But don't use a percentage in the Moisture Points table. Just put 300.

The same goes for invasive metering of carpets and studwalls. Write down the number (45.8 for example).

Now write "A" in the next table under the "MP" column. The Material Type in this example would be "drywall". Then find an unaffected piece of drywall and take a second reading. Put that number in the "Dry Standard" column. This is your new drying goal for the next three days.

Repeat these steps for each moisture point, and material, in the room.

Your equipment has been running for a few minutes now. Choose which dehu you will be tracking and take an atmospheric reading at the EXHAUST port. List the dehu number above the Date and Time on the [**RDC**] the same way you listed it on the Room Notes ("DHXXL-0123" for example).

Initial #18 and get on to your paperwork review.

19. Paperwork Review

Now for the moment of truth. How did you do? This is your chance to fill any blanks you might have.

Are there 19 sets of initials on your Checklist?

Does every page have the Job Name, Date, Time, Tech and Phone filled out?

How do your room notes look? How about the rest of your mitigation package? Does your sketch look like something I could read?

Keep in mind that it is VERY likely that you won't ever come back to this job site. Someone else will be checking the drying progress tomorrow. Will they be able to use your paperwork? Can they read your writing? Honestly?

Pull out your Daily Report [**DR**] and write down your parting thoughts. What does the next tech on this job need to know BEFORE they show up? Are there animals that require certain doors to be kept locked? Does the client have any special considerations?

Tip #28: Don't leave your teammates in the dark.

Write down your final impressions and give your team a heads-up for tomorrow. Then initial your Document Review done.

20. Set Follow-Up Appointment

This is your last check-in with your client. Ask them if they have any questions. Offer to show them how your equipment works. Take the time to make sure they understand everything and are satisfied with your work so far.

Explain why there are hoses wrapped around their sink faucets, and the importance that they stay there for the duration of the drying.

Give your client an idea of how long this process will take and what the next steps are. Then ask the following questions:

1. "We will be back tomorrow to check the drying progress. What time works best for you?"
2. "We will contact your insurance company and give them progress updates for you, is that alright with you?"
3. "Once your adjuster is assigned, would you like us to meet him/her on site to assist in the process?"
4. (if applicable) "Our project manager will contact you in the next couple days to discuss the repair process. His/her name is _____. His phone number is _____."

Give your client as much advance notice as possible. You are the expert. They are relying on you to educate them. Do a good job of communicating expectations and responsibilities and you'll be rewarded by a happy and satisfied customer.

Next Steps….

Nicely done. You've just finished a perfectly executed mitigation job. Your client is happy and you're on the road. Now what?

It is very important that the Mitigation Package gets back to your office and scanned into the file right away. There are a lot of things that need to start happening, which are based on the information you just gathered and created.

Your scheduler needs to know when you set the follow up appointment for tomorrow. If your company doesn't have availability at that time, your client needs to be made aware of it – and soon.

That's it. You've done a great job. Give yourself a pat on the back, then get ready to do it all again tomorrow!

Resources and References

Contact Andrew McCabe: Andy@TheClaim.Clinic

Claims and Restoration Consulting and Coaching: https://clarity.fm/andrewmccabe

Andy is also available for coaching, teaching and consulting online and in person.

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Andrew McCabe is a writer and restoration professional based in Bend, Oregon. He is a fifteen-year veteran of the disaster recovery industry. He began his career in Portland, Oregon with a company called DowColumbia.

Andy has performed every function of a restoration professional from mold and water technician to marketing and estimating. He applies his knowledge and experience helping contractors navigate the strange world of insurance claims.

He is a licensed insurance adjuster in the State of Oregon and holds several industry certifications including Applied Structural Drying, Certified Restoration Technician and Mold Remediation Technician.

After working for several contractors in three states, Andy opened the independent Xactimate estimating & consulting company Claims Delegates. Claims Delegates helps contractors and property owners alike, navigate the world of insurance claims.

Andy has started several new ventures in 2015 to further help the Restoration Industry as a whole, including:

- TheClaim.Clinic - Podcast dedicated to disaster recovery education

Andy is always open to making new connections and helping out whenever he can. Feel free to reach out on LinkedIn: http://www.linkedin.com/in/andymccabe.

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