After a Leak: Water Damage Checklist

A printable, step by step list for Boulder County homeowners and renters. Tick each box as you go. Safety comes first.

Need a local water extraction pro? Call (720) 615-8346

24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Boulder County, CO.

Danger first. If you smell gas, leave the home and call 911 and your gas utility from outside. If water touches outlets, cords or the electrical panel, stay out. Call an electrician or the utility. Call 911 if anyone is in danger.

1. First 15 minutes: stay safe and stop the source

- [ ] Check for gas smell, sparks, buzzing or standing water near electrical items. Leave if unsure.
- [ ] Find the source: burst pipe, appliance, roof leak, sump pump, sewer backup or snowmelt.
- [ ] Shut off the main water valve if a pipe or appliance is leaking. Know where it is before an emergency.
- [ ] If it is safe, turn off power to the wet area at the breaker. Do not step into water to reach the panel.
- [ ] Keep children and pets out of the wet area. Sewer or flood water can carry germs. Avoid contact.

2. Document before you move things

- [ ] Take wide and close up photos and a slow video of every wet room, item and damaged surface.
- [ ] Write down the date and time you found the water and what you think caused it.
- [ ] Keep damaged items you can safely keep until your insurer says otherwise.
- [ ] Save receipts for any emergency costs, such as a plumber, hotel or supplies.

3. Protect what you can, safely

- [ ] Lift small furniture, rugs, books, electronics and papers out of the water and onto dry, high surfaces.
- [ ] Pull up wet area rugs. Prop up furniture legs with foil or plastic to stop stains.
- [ ] Open windows and run fans if the air outside is drier. Use a dehumidifier if you have one and the room is safe.
- [ ] Do not use a regular household vacuum on water. Do not use TV or electronics that were wet.
- [ ] Wear gloves, boots and a mask when handling wet or dirty materials.

4. Make the calls

- [ ] Call a local water extraction professional: (720) 615-8346, any hour.
- [ ] Call your insurance company or agent. Ask what the policy covers and what they need from you.
- [ ] Tell your landlord or HOA if you rent or share walls and plumbing.
- [ ] Call your water utility or city if the source is a main line or the street.

5. Next 24 to 48 hours: dry it out

- [ ] Aim to start drying quickly. The EPA says mold can start to grow in 24 to 48 hours on damp materials.
- [ ] Wet drywall, insulation and carpet padding often need to be removed. A pro can check with moisture meters.
- [ ] Keep a simple log: dates, photos, calls made and names of people you talked to.
- [ ] Ask any pro you hire for a written scope and price before work starts.
- [ ] Do not paint or rebuild until the area is confirmed dry.

6. Questions to ask any water damage pro

- [ ] Are you insured, and can you show proof?
- [ ] What will you do, what will it cost, and what could change the price? Get it in writing.
- [ ] How will you measure that things are dry, and will you share the readings?
- [ ] What is the plan for materials that cannot be saved?

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General information only. It is not legal, insurance, medical or electrical advice. Read your own policy and ask your insurer about coverage. Sources used for this list: US EPA (mold and moisture guidance), CDC (flood and water damage safety), IICRC S500 water damage standard.