

24-HOUR DRYING CHECKLIST FOR TOPEKA HOMEOWNERS

Act fast. Mold can start growing in 24–48 hours when materials stay wet.

✓ STEP 1: MAKE IT SAFE FIRST

- Shut off power to wet areas at the breaker panel if safe to do so
- Avoid standing water if electrical hazards, sharp objects, or structural damage are present
- Identify water source: clean water, gray water, or sewage/flood water
- **If sewage or flood water: STOP and call a professional immediately**

✓ STEP 2: STOP THE WATER SOURCE

- Turn off main water valve or fixture supply feeding the leak
- Use sandbags or barriers to prevent more storm/flood water from entering
- Schedule plumber or repair service as soon as possible
- Do not continue if water keeps entering the building

✓ STEP 3: REMOVE STANDING WATER FAST

- Use wet/dry vacuums rated for water on floors and carpet
- Mop and squeegee remaining pooled water into buckets
- Direct water to floor drains if available and safe
- The more water you remove now, the faster materials dry

✓ STEP 4: PULL OUT POROUS ITEMS

- Move rugs, doormats, cushions, cardboard, books, and clothes to a dry space
- Separate items so air reaches all sides
- Lift furniture off wet carpet using blocks or foil under legs
- **Plan to discard: soaked carpet pad, wet ceiling tiles, wet cellulose insulation**

✓ STEP 5: START ACTIVE DRYING

- Place fans so air flows across wet surfaces, not just into open space
- Run dehumidifiers continuously in affected rooms
- Keep indoor humidity near 30–50% if possible (use a hygrometer)
- Keep windows closed if outdoor air is humid; open only if outside air is cool and dry

✓ STEP 6: DECIDE WHAT TO DISCARD (24–48 HOURS)

Remove and replace:

- Wet ceiling tiles and cellulose insulation
- Soaked carpet padding (even if carpet is salvageable)
- Heavily saturated drywall sections, especially at wall bottoms
- Materials with visible mold or strong musty odor

✓ STEP 7: MONITOR THROUGH FIRST 24 HOURS

- Check indoor humidity with hygrometer (target below 50%)
- Look for new water stains, bubbling paint, or sagging drywall
- Smell for musty or earthy odors near baseboards and in closets
- **If humidity stays high or odors appear: Call a professional**

✓ STEP 8: CALL A PRO WHEN NEEDED

Call a Topeka water damage or mold professional if:

- Water came from sewage, flood, or contaminated source
- Multiple rooms or levels are affected
- You see visible mold or smell strong musty odors
- Humidity stays high despite your drying efforts
- You are unsure about safety, materials, or next steps

QUICK FAQ

Q: How fast can mold start?

A: Mold can begin growing in 24–48 hours on wet materials when humidity stays high.

Q: Should I open windows?

A: Only if outdoor air is cooler and drier than indoor air. If outside is humid, keep closed and use dehumidifiers.

Q: Do I always throw away wet carpet?

A: Carpet padding usually needs removal. Carpet itself can sometimes be dried and cleaned within 24–48 hours if not heavily soaked.

Q: What should I document?

A: Take photos and videos of standing water, damage, and all affected materials before major tear-out. Note times and actions.

Q: When is DIY not enough?

A: When water is sewage/flood, when multiple areas are wet, or when mold is already visible or smells strong.

 **NEXT STEP**

For professional water damage restoration in Topeka with 24/7 response, equipment, and moisture monitoring:

Visit: waterrestorationtopeka.com/service/water-damage-restoration/

For detailed structural drying guidance on walls, floors, and hidden cavities:

Visit: waterrestorationtopeka.com/structural-drying-guide-for-water-damaged-homes/

Sources: EPA Water Damage Tables, CDC Homeowner's Guide to Mold, National Pesticide Information Center, Topeka water damage guidance