



CONTENTS SOLUTIONS

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STORM DAMAGE –
NO TIME FOR AMATEURS

CONTENTS SPECIALISTS SAVE
FOR CONTRACTORS TOO

WHEN TIME
IS NOT ON OUR SIDE





STORM DAMAGE – NO TIME FOR AMATEURS

Did you hear about the homeowner who had lost power in his home after an intense storm and used a lit candle to go looking for what was causing the slight hissing sound in his kitchen, only to discover that the gale force wind had violently rocked his gas lines back and forth until one of them had come loose and had filled his kitchen with invisible natural gas?

Another had plenty of electricity and decided to vacuum up some water in his living room that had been deposited there by a relentless thunder storm after it tore part of his roof away? His vacuum was not the type used by the contents pros and although he survived the attempt, the electric sweeper did not.

And there was a building manager who noticed a peculiar bulge in the ceiling of an office after a rain and hail storm that had cracked windows, flooded interior walls and saturated carpets. The manager wanted to get a better look at the bulge so he turned on the fluorescent lights and poked at the ceiling protuberance with a broom handle – two things happened simultaneously, first, water cascaded forth from the sagging ceiling and fortunately for the

manager, the wet light fixtures blew out all the fuses on that floor.

Turning on a wet computer or big screen TV to “test” it, will probably fry the circuitry. The spark from a single light switch can ignite a pocket of gas that has accumulated for hours from an appliance fixture that has been loosened by falling trees, or even just corroded pipe that has been twisted by gale force gusts.

The contents managers know all about these things – they are professionals and approach each job with extensive training and expertise as their foundation.

They know that flood waters are likely to be contaminated and that everything the deluge has touched is most likely corrupted and will need careful cleaning and sanitizing to return the home or office to pre-loss condition.

Powerful storms require formidable response – it is no time for well-meaning amateurs. These are the times when true contents specialists can really prove their worth.



STEAMATIC AUSTRALIA – HAIL STORMS

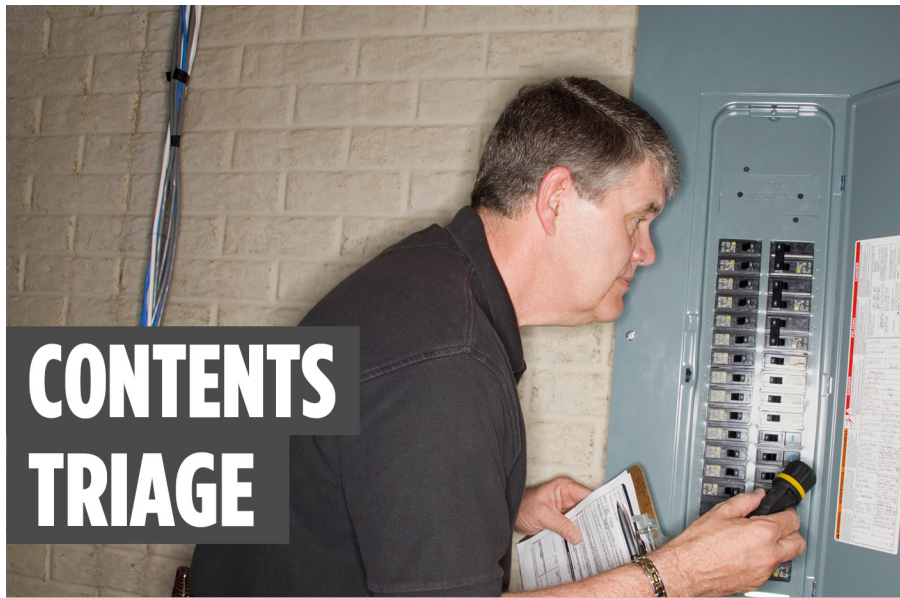
When New South Wales suffered another of its devastating hail storms, the stones smashed through cars, and literally flattened major retailers roofs by sheer weight of the ice.

Steamatic Australia was there and one of our branch managers estimated that we responded to 500 insurance claims in only four weeks

In Maitland, we dried out a major showroom and were just catching our breath when another hail storm (in Sydney) piled its stones so high that the roofs of several more retailers gave way.

For one international freight company, we wrapped the entire building in plastic in order to save and restore the contents (with roofs as high as 10 meters).

With over 40 offices, we can just pick up a phone, then it's, “All hands on deck.”



CONTENTS TRIAGE

Contents Managers don't enter a house or office where they suspect there is a gas leak. First, they arrange to have the gas turned off at an exterior main. Next, they open external doors and windows to "air" the place out.

The homeowners' families or office workers, and their own team members are far too valuable to risk.

If there has been flooding, the external electrical power connections are shut down (it has been reported that some untrained workers head for an internal "breaker box" to move the breakers to the disengaged position – the problem is that if outlets,

switches, electrical items or even the breaker box has already been exposed to water, it is a dangerous proposition to try to maneuver to the interior shut-off panel). External shut-off is standard protocol for the contents professionals.

Once inside, they begin emergency measures to get the furniture up on foam blocks to save them from further damage and they unplug every device and appliance to protect them from possible future electrical shorts.

And, of course, any broken glass or submerged objects get priority as well – safety is our primary concern.

WHEN TIME IS NOT ON OUR SIDE

Sometimes the insured or the insurer will call us in after an extended period has elapsed from when the initial disaster occurred.

Often this leads to an unfortunate worsening of the situation. For example, mould can grow within the first 24 to 72 hours after a flood, but the storm that caused the flood also put trees in streets (making them impassible), or the insurer is faced with too many claims and must deal with them as they come in.

And the more toxic the flood waters, the more hazardous the assignment – we need protective clothing, PPE, air scrubbers, more sanitizers and our best, most experienced team members on the job.

This is where the pictures we take become even more valuable – the insurer's representatives need to see the layers of damage, without having to enter into a hazardous environment to do so.



CONTRACTORS ARE HIRING THE CONTENTS PROS

Quite a number of contractors are hiring contents teams to round out their staff on jobs that have a significant contents component.

In C&R Magazine consultant and instructor, Barb Jackson CR, shared a couple of reasons, "There are many pitfalls, which can cost [a contractor] the entire profitability of a job. Breakage, accusations of theft, and inefficiencies are just a few examples."

Trained contents pros don't cost – they save! They actually improve the insurer's bottom line and that of the contractors who bring them in on any given job. And they blend so seamlessly with the company that hired them, often no one knows they were there – but are glad they were when everyone sees the improved final statement!



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COMING UP IN THE NEXT ISSUES OF CONTENTS SOLUTIONS



**WHEN OLD BOOKS
ARE POISONOUS**



**YARD SALE DISCARD?
OR VALUED TREASURE?**



**SOME THINGS SHOULD
NOT BE RESTORED**