AVOID INVOICE ESTIMATE REVIEWS
Contents Pros’ Techniques

Mold, Mildew, Malodors
Porous Surface Solutions

HAI’S - WHEN HOSPITALS NEED THE CONTENTS PROS
Long Term Results
Every once in awhile, a contractor may find his (her) invoice being placed “in review” or “push back,” meaning that the adjuster wants more information about the job in question or that he is disputing part of the claim.

Often, it will be discovered that there was simply a misunderstanding that is quickly and easily resolved by open and forthright communication – and sometimes we need something more.

To get a better perspective of how these matters can be quickly and easily resolved (especially in the world of the contents professional) we went to North America’s premier instructor for contents restoration, Barb Jackson, CR.

Barb is a consultant for over 1000 contents restoration firms. When we asked about her favorite technique for resolving “in review” challenges she didn’t hesitate.

“One of the first things I often do is to tell the contractor to share the photographs from the job with the adjuster. We train our graduates to take pictures of all relevant contents as they perform the first walkthrough of the property. Ideally, the initial “photo-diary” is created with the homeowner or building manager by the side of the project manager (who is taking the pictures as part of an initial estimate).

“Later, the project manager will take even more pictures as part of a “Digital Photo Inventory.” This method of accounting gives an almost instantaneous access to all items that are packed out or moved to another room, etc. Both we and the adjuster then know the condition of the item before it was moved, where it was taken and how it looked when it was restored.

“A new wrinkle in the photo journal style of documentation is to use video cameras for at least the initial walk-through. In that manner the project manager can keep up a running commentary of what he (she) sees and is experiencing at the moment.

“It might sound something like this, ‘I am entering the foyer of the Smith house and there is a lot of soot damage throughout the portico. The entry-way table seems scratched and there is some decided splintering in the upper drawer area, as you can see.

“’The carpets are drenched with water from the fire hoses and they are deeply trodden with black boot marks – which may be a result of soot being ground in by firemen’s boots.

“’The painting here in the initial hallway has been exposed to high heat and I will forward a picture of it to the Conservation center to see if it can be repaired and at what cost.’

“We do all this photographing so both we and the adjuster can quickly see the scope of the job with extraordinary detail that is not available in a hand written document.”

Did you know that the EPA (the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency) doesn’t recognize any product for disinfection on porous surfaces like couches, bedding and curtains? There is a category of sanitizers for carpets and when contents pros are cleaning them they use an EPA-registered “carpet sanitizer.”

So how do the contents professionals kill bacteria and mold in porous surfaces? First they use a deep cleaning detergent to dislodge unwanted particles. They pay close attention to the manufacturer’s recommended “dwell time.”

Next they follow up with a disinfectant that will kill microorganisms and has ingredients that will deodorize the fabric. So it is not uncommon for them to use carpet sanitizers and deodorizers that are registered with the EPA when cleaning and deodorizing furniture.

Occasionally, they will use fragrances as well, but only when combined with a product that destroys odors at their source. Contents pros have no interest in masking odors – they want the odor causing mold and bacteria to be totally destroyed.
Have you ever thought about all the mold, bacteria and other contaminants that end up in the collection tanks of carpet cleaning and furniture cleaning machines?

Any technician can tell you that the odor alone from one of those tanks will alert you to the fact that they are full of noxious waste. How do they neutralize the smell and toxic matter? They clean their collection tanks with the same disinfectants and cleaners that they use for the homeowner.

They often let the dwell time last much longer (hours instead of minutes) to make sure no contaminants survive from one job to the next.

Hospitals worldwide have become increasingly sensitive to the issue of “HAI’s” (hospital acquired infections) and some insurance companies will not pay for the additional costs related to such infections.

But they are not alone in their concerns. Cruise ship lines, spas, resorts, nursing homes, even office buildings are vulnerable to fast-spreading diseases. And with reports that computer keyboards, light switches, common use telephones, and even elevator buttons can harbor more bacteria per square inch than toilet seats, it appears that their concerns may be justified.

Hospitals are taking a second look at the contents pros and asking what technology and skills they can bring to help sanitize and disinfect germ-laden surfaces.

For example, contents cleaning professionals know that when using disinfectants, dwell time (the amount of time one leaves the compounds in place) can make all the difference. Some solutions can take up to 30 minutes to do their work.

Even the “human friendly” thyme-based disinfectants that are favored by the contents pros (hospitals are most interested in these because they are harmless to their patients) will eventually “lose their punch” over days or weeks. So now, the contents teams are using “electrostatic” and other sprayers, combined with antimicrobial mixtures that actually bind to the surface where it is applied, allowing them to last months instead of days.

Contents specialists are still the cutting edge when specialty disinfection is needed – and they never stop searching for new and better methods.

Eliminating Contaminants

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Coming Up In the Next Issues of Contents Solutions

ADJUSTERS SEEK CONTENTS TEAMS
SAVING MONEY ON EVERY JOB

HELPING AGENTS GET RENEWALS
Contents Pros’ Hidden Agenda!

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