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## **With all the flooding in the Midwest... Don't forget the DANGERS of Category 3 Water**

The Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification (IICRC) has done a tremendous amount of work towards advancing the science of water damage restoration.

Contaminated water can cause significant health hazards to person dealing with water damage. It is extremely important to properly assess and monitor site conditions to minimize any harmful exposure.

There are several factors that can influence the cleanliness of water. However, time is considered the key element. A quick response to water damage is vital in dealing with any situation.

The IICRC defines water contamination in following three general categories:

- ❖ Category 1 (Clean Water) – Water that does not pose significant harm to humans. \*\* Examples: broken water supply, broken toilet tanks/bowls with no contaminants, rainwater.
- ❖ Category 2 (Gray Water) – Water that contains significant level of contamination and has potential to cause sickness if consumed or exposed to humans. \*\* Examples: Discharge from dishwashing or washing machines, an overflow from toilet bowls with urine present, sump pump failure, broken aquariums, punctured waterbed.
- ❖ Category 3 (Black Water) – Water that contains pathogenic agents and is severely unsanitary. \*\* Examples: Sewage, toilet backflows, all flooding from seawater, surface water, rivers, and streams.

Thousands of microorganism types flourish in water and water damaged materials. Over time, these organisms can multiply to a level that becomes hazardous to humans. Visible fungal growth may be expected within 24-48 hours after substrates reach sufficient moisture content. For an example, an illustration of E.coli amplification, cells dividing every 20 minutes starting with one cell and 8:00 am could produce over a billion cells by 6:00 pm that day! TIME is a key factor in dealing with water damage.

If responded to quickly enough, you can minimize damage to goods and property. You can also minimize the potential adverse health effects of people. A quick response by trained and knowledgeable people should be considered in all water-damage incidents. Consider IICRC certified firms for all Category 3 incidents, or any incident that has the potential of becoming a Category 3. The IICRC has a certified firm referral directory available at [www.IICRC.org](http://www.IICRC.org).

**\*\* Examples are illustrative only. There may be unseen conditions that alter the categorization of water to make it unsafe.**

Source: [envirochex.com](http://envirochex.com)