



Best Practice Series

No 8 – Assessment of water damaged board



7 THINGS TO CONSIDER WITH WATER DAMAGED BOARD

Unfortunately, accidents happen. Never by design but they happen. If there has been an ‘event’ which involves water where it shouldn’t be - where to from here?

Firstly, we need to get rid of the immediate problem, preferably as fast as possible. Let’s get this water out of the picture and see how bad it is.

What to consider when assessing the damage:

01. Was the water clean or ‘dirty’? Dirty means anything other than clean water from internal pipes, eg. sewage, flooding from a creek or surface overflow from a neighbouring site. Dirty water carries all sorts of nasties, so the plasterboard will need to be replaced.
02. Is there any mould? Presence of visible mould means there’s a high chance of trouble going on behind, where you can’t see.
03. Are there multiple layers of plasterboard? It is very difficult to adequately dry between layers of plasterboard, so this generally would be considered for replacement.
04. How long has it been since the ‘event’? If it’s been less than 48 hours and you are getting things on the way to dry, then you have greatly increased your chances of salvation. Anything past 60 hours and the ship has sailed.
05. Is the insulation wet? Unfortunately, wet insulation is nigh on impossible to dry out as it tends to get waterlogged, this holds the water behind the board and is the perfect breeding ground for mould.

06. If a “performance” system, has the integrity of the face or core been compromised? Performance systems demand that the board be complete and undamaged in order to perform to it’s full capacity.
07. You can check the core integrity with a “poke test”. Take a reasonably pointy object like a screw driver and gently prod several spots around the area in question. If it feels on the soft side consider replacing it. If it feels reasonably first still it should be fine to keep.

As plasterboard is generally an interior use product, the assumption is that the building is, and will remain, E2 compliant and stay dry. If there is continual water contacting the board and, even if it fully dries out each time, the gypsum core will eventually weaken in its structure and become crumbly within the paper face/back.

OK, so if it’s getting dry and it passes the criteria above you are probably going to have a high chance of saving the board.

If it doesn’t, you need to consider replacing the board.



The GIB® Site Guide contains all the information you’ll need to replace water damaged board.