

# EXCLUSIVELY CONTENTS

RESTORE WHAT MATTERS

Vol. 20, Issue 8

## Contents Restored In Flooded Offices and Homes

## Saving Families' Most Precious Items

Provided By Your Contents Restoration Partner



5640 Knott Ave.  
Buena Park, CA 90621-1808

**Phone: 1-800-589-2740**

**Office: 562-735-4966**

## Contents Pros Are Solution-Oriented Restorers





Contents restoration professionals serve private businesses, homeowners, municipalities, hospitals, schools, county buildings, restaurants, theaters and many more public and private establishments. Over the years they have been sought out by insurance firms to help restore the valued items from homes and offices.

Usually, restoring a company's or individual's valuables costs far less than replacing them – some restoration companies are estimating that as much as 90% of contents can be restored to pre-loss condition for as little as 20% of the item's replacement cost.

And sometimes, as with irreplaceable documents, the value of the restoration process is incalculable.

After a home flood, soft contents such as clothing, bedding, curtains, towels and other textiles require not only cleaning, but decontamination as well in order to remove dirt, mold, bacteria and odors -- if you think COVID-19 is potentially dangerous, just think of a sewage back-up or a flood from a nearby river or even what the neighborhood streets offers.

The National Center for Health Research released a paper recently that stated, "University of Arizona researchers also found that the average desktop has 400 times more bacteria than the average toilet seat. That study took samples from offices across the United States, and also showed that women's desks tended to harbor more bacteria than men's." <http://www.center4research.org/bacteria-computer-keyboards-toilet-seats/>

And that is before a flood or sewage backup!

Many business owners and homeowners are often amazed at the massive number of items that can be restored – purses, stuffed animals, photographs, figurines, paintings, antique furniture and clocks – the list seems to be endless.

Saturated couches, beds and anything with stuffing and padding takes far more time and effort to restore than a wet table or chair, but it can be done. Even with that in mind, sometimes a Contents Manager will point out that the cost of dismantling a bed mattress, removing the padding, replacing it and restoring the stitching may exceed the price of replacing it. And the manager, ever mindful of the budget, is constantly balancing the cost of one process over the worth of the item(s) being restored – every dollar saved in one section can be used to restore more valued articles in another.

Wet documents can be restored. Often the procedure includes freeze-drying the papers, but there are other practices that rely on computer scanning and reproducing the documents from the scans.

Homeowners are particularly grateful for the contents pros' ability to restore items that have very little monetary value, but great personal worth.

For the contents specialists, everything that has been exposed to the flood is valuable no matter where they encounter it, home, office, bank, storefront, hospital – their motto is always, "Restore, not replace!"

Their goal for businesses is to "get the doors open."

For families it is to make the house safe, dry and clean and to get the owners back home as soon as is possible.



## TO TOSS OR NOT TO TOSS

Famed motivational speaker, Anthony Robbins, once said, "Nothing in life has any meaning except the meaning we give it."

This sometimes becomes of paramount importance when a contents manager has to decide whether a given item should be "total-lossed" or restored.

A Steinway® baby grand piano that is covered in soot and can be restored is an easy choice. But how about a pinecone that was spray painted gold and liberally doused in glitter at a summer camp, then worn as an unlikely brooch by "Mom" at various celebrations ever since – thus becoming a family tradition?

We have had adjusters see such things (hear the story that goes with them) and actually encourage us to restore them.

They may have no resale value, but have high intrinsic value – so much so that no price can be assigned to the items. Thus, the contents specialists make a concerted effort to restore them.

Who gets to decide? Ultimately, it must always be the owner, of course. Especially when the worth of a given item might just be priceless.



## SAVING FAMILIES' MOST PRECIOUS ITEMS

You may have seen the headline, “Mortuary gives wrong ashes to family — who then scatter them.” and, “Family receives wrong ashes for cremated mother.” That one was from a family whose mother had asked that her ashes be spread on the ocean. WMC Channel 5 reported, “The family had been planning a cruise to fulfill those wishes, until Noel’s daughter opened the urn for the first time and found a tag with someone else’s information inside.”

And the one that made the national news was, “Family Wins \$3.5 Million Settlement from Funeral Home in Ashes Mix-Up.”

These captions were all born out of “accidents” and incompetence by the various mortuaries.

It was a crematorium’s worst nightmare and it was about to happen again. There had been a fire and the building was declared a total

loss. The flames had not reached any human remains, but water from the firefighter’s hoses had saturated the boxes in which ashes had been stored.

The contents team was faced with two challenges – protect the “cremains” and re-catalog the identification documents before they were permanently degraded.

The structural workers started cleaning and demolishing what was left of the building, while the contents pros scanned contaminated documents and stored them in a digital format. Then transferred all the ashes into new boxes.

Not one person’s remains were lost and now there was a digital record of all the individual’s location. When concerned family members contacted the funeral director, she was able to assure them that their loved ones’ ashes were still intact.

## SECRET OF PACKING MATERIALS REVEALED

Experienced adjusters can often tell at-a-glance whether a team used too many boxes or not enough to justify their invoice.

And experienced Contents Supervisors most often have the same instincts on any given job.

But what does a contents team do when faced with odd sized items that simply won’t fit in an average-sized box (or even an extra-large one)?

First of all, contents professionals prefer to “box” an item rather than to simply load it into one of their transport vehicles in order to move it to their restoration facility. If a massive musical instrument or a one-piece glass sculpture simply won’t fit in any box that is currently available, it is not uncommon to find the pros cutting and shaping other boxes, or building a wooden crate, in order to create a new, more appropriate container or package that will get the job done properly.

Of course we also use packing blankets, bubble wrap, stretch wrap, and packing peanuts or loose fill to make all items secure. If there is an antique set of dishes valued at thousands of dollars, we will use appropriate amounts of packing materials in order to make sure the set travels from a home or office to our cleaning facility and back again – padding is cheap, antiques are not!

So our secret is to err on the side of caution, and treat each item as if it was our own.



## CONTENTS PROS ARE SOLUTION-ORIENTED

If you have read our past issues of Contents Solutions, you already know that the contents professionals have saved huge sums for their clients – like the fire damaged electronics from a university fire that took many days to clean and restore, but university officials estimated that they saved \$4,000,000 on that one job.

Or the American “castle” where millions were saved when the contents pros turned an indoor basketball court into the world’s largest vortex drying complex.

Or the contractor who restored \$35,000 worth of figurines that the adjuster was prepared to “cash out.”

But we also restore contaminated flatware, teddy bears, a child’s Batman collection; the aging, paperback works of a once well-known mystery writer that an outraged grandpa demanded to be restored even though the adjuster felt it was worth only yard sale prices.

The point is, there are very few jobs that are beyond the capabilities of the contents specialists, mostly because they have a secret “weapon.” They are trained early on to have and to use their creative abilities.

When they are faced with a metaphorical “brick wall,” they use their collective minds to find an answer to the challenge.

Untrained workers tend to focus on the problems before them, the contents professionals focus on solutions.





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**Specializing in  
Contents Restoration!  
Professional pack out  
and inventory service.  
With restorative cleaning for  
all types of contents:  
Antiques, Electronics,  
Art work, Fine Fabrics, Rugs,  
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**CHOOSING THE RIGHT  
TOOL FOR THE JOB**



**FORGING STRONG LINKS WITH  
AGENTS AND ADJUSTERS**



**WHEN MAKING EVERYTHING  
FIT IS IMPERATIVE!**