

CRDN's First Responder Program Provides Protection, Improves Communication

by Wayne Wudyka

When you assign a loss to a restoration service provider, the crew arriving on-site represents you and your company's brand. How they look and how they interact with your insured will have an enormous impact on customer satisfaction and your reputation.

Understanding the significance of thorough communication, establishing credibility and enhancing professionalism, the Certified Restoration Drycleaning Network (CRDN) has initiated a First Responder program as the first step in dealing with the textile component of a contents loss. CRDN's First Responder program is based on a commitment to dispatching a management-level professional to meet with an insured before on-site services begin.

The CRDN manager provides an introduction and thorough overview of the textile restoration process, ensuring that the insured has accurate expectations of what can be restored and an understanding of the next steps. Dealing with the emotional side of the situation is equally important; quite often the insured is faced with a once-in-a-lifetime tragedy, compounded by uncertainty about what to do and where to start. CRDN's First Responders are specially trained to demonstrate empathy, setting the insured's mind at ease since clothing tends to be among the most personal items affected by a loss.

In this initial meeting with the First Responder, the insured learns about emergency needs clothing—items that will be restored and returned within 24 to 48 hours, saving ALE and enabling the insured to focus on other parts of their loss. Using a customized checklist, the First Responder helps the insured think

through the coming weeks, inquiring about special events, business trips, school functions and other common daily activities that require certain clothing items. Such a tactic simplifies the situation by bringing a systematic approach to an otherwise chaotic set of circumstances. This "rush" service demonstrates action, reflecting positively on the adjuster, and creates greater confidence in CRDN's ability to successfully restore garments and textiles, as the insured can inspect restored items within a day or two.

The insured also appreciates the manager as the point of contact for any questions or needs that arise during the textile restoration process, alleviating unnecessary calls to the adjuster. The manager on-site scopes the loss with the insured as well as the adjuster whenever possible to detail affected textiles. This scope forms the blueprint for the customer service representatives who handle the itemized pack-out and prepares the textile restoration staff for the quantity of items and type of contaminant when the textiles are brought to the cleaning facility. The scope also provides an initial estimate that allows the adjuster to set reserves in a timely manner and to provide direction on the textile component based on severity of the loss and any potential coverage limitations.

CRDN's First Responder program originated from more than 100 one-on-one third-party interviews conducted with clients and insureds. From this qualitative data, it was apparent that everyone realized greater value when concise communication occurred from the onset. The First Responder was identified as a crucial link among adjuster, contractor, insured and staff. As the "quarterback"

for the textile restoration, the First Responder was charged with identifying the insured's needs, providing an organized update as the adjuster's "eyes and ears" on-site, preparing the staff and monitoring progress from pack-out to "rush" delivery to final delivery. Overall, the First Responder program helps ensure that a claim that starts smoothly, ends smoothly.

Like the First Responder program, CRDN's entire system for response and service was designed to meet the distinct needs of the insurance industry. An on-site inventory, for example, has always been a cornerstone of CRDN's process. Like any service provider that packs-out hard goods, CRDN understands that proper documentation protects the insured and adjuster, as well as CRDN, by confirming what was removed from the site and noting any pre-existing damage to items. The inventory becomes a "check and balance" throughout the process and authenticates the piece count when items are returned. This basic, common practice eliminates risk, reduces severity and unnecessary work, and improves satisfaction, a key metric confirmed by CRDN's independent customer satisfaction surveys.

CRDN takes very seriously the responsibility that comes with the transfer of your brand to our team. With the First Responder program, CRDN is able to make certain that the needs of the insured are properly balanced with those of the adjuster.

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