

FAQ: WHAT IS RESTORATION?

Understanding the Difference Between the Restoration and Construction Industries



www.restorationindustry.org

1. What is the key difference between restoration and construction?

The primary difference lies in the purpose and approach of each industry. The construction industry focuses on new builds, renovations, and expansions, while the restoration industry specializes in repairing, remediating, and returning damaged structures to their pre-loss condition after events like water, fire, mold, or storm damage.

2. What types of work does the restoration industry handle?

Restoration is water extraction and drying, fire damage clean-up and soot removal, removal of damaged carpet and other flooring material, removal of damaged drywall and building materials, removal of smoke odors, sanitizing and preventive activities of mold or mold-containment matter, and includes the repair or replacement of damaged materials unless structural, electrical, plumbing or air conditioning work is performed; and usually does not require a general contractors license.

3. How does construction differ from restoration in project scope?

Construction projects are typically planned, structured, and executed over a longer period, often involving architects, engineers, and general contractors. Restoration, on the other hand, often responds to unexpected property damage, requiring immediate action, emergency mitigation, and specialized expertise in handling hazardous materials and structural concerns. In Emergency Service Restoration, no structural, electrical, plumbing, or air conditioning work is performed.

4. What are the licensing and certification requirements for each industry?

- Construction typically local or state-issued general contractor licenses or registration, building permits and inspections.
- Restoration often involves specialized certifications, such as:
 - IICRC Certifications: Water Damage Restoration Technician (WRT), Applied Structural Drying (ASD), Commercial Drying Specialist (CDS), Fire and Smoke Damage Restoration Technician (FSRT), and more specialized certifications
 - RIA Advanced Designations: (e.g., Fire Loss, Water Loss, Environmental Risk, Contents Loss, Certified Restorer).
 - Specialized Equipment: Moisture meters, HEPA vacuums, dehumidifiers, air scrubbers, hydroxyl generators, thermal imaging cameras, and PPE.

5. Who typically hires restoration vs. construction professionals?

- Restoration companies are often hired by insurance companies, property managers, and homeowners following property damage.
- Construction companies are engaged by developers, property owners, and businesses for new builds, remodels, and renovations.

6. Do restoration professionals also do construction work?

Construction companies are engaged by developers, property owners, and businesses for new builds, remodels, and renovations. Yes, many restoration companies offer reconstruction services as part of their business model. Once the mitigation and cleanup process is complete, they may rebuild affected areas, which blends elements of both industries.

7. Why is restoration more time-sensitive than construction?

The remediation and restoration industry provides emergency services on properties to effectively remove unwanted water, including water after firefighting efforts or storm damage, and reduce moisture that contributes to mold formation. Quickly responding is crucial to protect tangible and real property from further damage and additionally protect the health and safety of individuals and employees related to mold exposure.

8. How does insurance play a role in restoration vs. construction?

- Restoration projects are frequently covered by property insurance, with costs determined by adjusters and insurance policies.
- Construction projects are usually funded directly by property owners, developers, or businesses and are less reliant on insurance claims.

9. Can a business operate in both restoration and construction?

Yes, many companies integrate both services to provide full-scale solutions. A restoration company may have an in-house construction team for rebuilding after mitigation, while a construction company may expand into restoration services to handle post-disaster projects.