

WHAT IS A “FLOOD CUT?”

4 minute read

In our everyday world of water damage restoration, we use many terms that are familiar to us but might be confusing to our clients. Since they make sense to us, they should make sense to everyone, right? Well, that's not the case. Sometimes, we need to take some time to explain things to our clients so that our work makes sense to them.

[Knowledge is a key to success](#) and sharing your knowledge with your customers builds trust and confidence in your business.

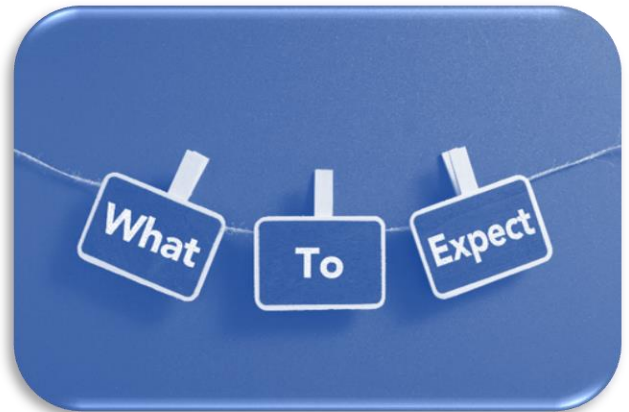
One of the most used terms that needs some explanation is the technique of a “flood cut.” We will routinely tell our techs to make a two-foot or four-foot flood cut on a wall, leaving the client to figure out what - and why - the techs are doing. **All they see is your worker tearing out their walls.**

Put yourself in their place. Maybe they thought the water was confined to a small area, or just a touch up the wall. Now, they see lots of damage and repairs needing to be fixed. How did it get so bad? Do these guys know what they are doing?

Explaining the need for a flood cut is a vital step. We know the science and [professional reasons](#) for the cut, and it helps our efforts to explain them in simple terms. There are two concepts that you should focus on when describing the need for a flood cut. The first is the concept of “wicking.” It is important to explain to the client that, even though the water line might only be a few inches, the water has made its way up the wall due to its' ability to wick up absorbent surfaces. The paper on the drywall allows for the water to wick up the wall, damaging the wall above the actual water line. If there is insulation behind the wall, that is also going to wick the water up farther than the actual water line.

The second concept to explain when doing a flood cut regards the structural beams behind the walls. In nearly every home, the beams behind the walls are made of wood. Wood is highly absorbent, and any water introduced to these beams will be sucked up into the body of the wood, especially the footers (the horizontal pieces on the bottom of the framing). Without removing the drywall, it is difficult to assess the extent of the water absorption, and even more difficult to dry the structure properly. Remember, water will wick up the beams as well!

Once we have explained the need for cutting the drywall, the next step is to give your client an idea as to why we are going to cut the drywall at fixed heights. Generally, we



use four heights as our guidelines for demolition. For simple, minor damages with little or no wicking we can simply remove the baseboard and cut the drywall at that height,



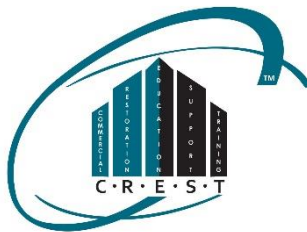
giving us access to the bottom footer of the structure. We can dry the base area and put the drywall back in a small strip, then replace the baseboard and have no further work.

For walls with some wicking, we will decide to do a flood cut at either a 2-foot or 4-foot height. Why pick these heights over any others? It's a construction decision. We want to limit the overall cost of the work, so we cut at these heights to

simplify the replacement of the drywall. If we can address the damage by removing two feet, then the repairman can simply cut his drywall sheets in half and replace the missing walls quickly and inexpensively. If the damage extends past two feet, then removing the wall to four feet allows the repairman to use full sheets for his repair. Cuts of three feet would require more labor and drywall, resulting in a costlier repair.

The final decision would be for walls with more than four feet of damage. In these cases, it is usually best to remove the entire wall. This makes demo quicker and easier, and then turns the repair into a full wall, which is also simpler than a "patch job."

Yes, flood cuts are simple concepts that we understand and use every day in our restoration work. Once we take the time to explain them to our clients, then we bring them along with us. [We build credibility](#), trust and, in the end, a happy and valued referral source.



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