



Date Issued: July 2026	Page No.: 1	Document No.: SOP-Safety-24
Revision: 1.0	Subject: Building Entry Procedure into Water/Sewer Damaged Areas	

1. Introduction

The Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Building Entry into Water/Sewer Damaged Areas was developed by the Department of Environmental Health & Safety in accordance with the University's Policy Statement on Health and Safety and to ensure compliance with the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to Facilities, Security, Custodial Services, Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S), and any personnel entering water/sewer-affected buildings and areas on Queen's University campuses.

3. Purpose

To ensure the safe, systematic entry into Queen's University buildings and spaces affected by water/sewer damage, whether due to plumbing leaks or rain-related water ingress. This procedure aims to protect personnel, building systems, and university assets by establishing safety requirements and hazard checks prior to and during initial entry.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Responsibilities of the Director of Environmental Health & Safety

- Ensure that departments are aware of their responsibilities under this SOP.
- Review this SOP periodically and amend as necessary.
- Assess for environmental, chemical, biological, safety or radiological risks, and provide guidance on appropriate controls.

4.2 Responsibilities of Fixit

- Process calls related to water/sewer damage events and notify the appropriate individual(s) to respond. This may include building managers, custodial services, area managers, EH&S, Risk and Insurance, and Emergency Services or Contractors.
- Provide additional support as required.

4.3 Responsibilities of Director of Campus Security and Security Services

- Ensure that all employees, and external emergency service groups (Kingston Police, OPP, RCMP) are given adequate supervision and instruction on the hazards of entering water/sewer damage prone buildings.
- Respond to emergency calls, control access, restrict unauthorized entry



Date Issued: July 2026	Page No.: 2	Document No.: SOP-Safety-24
Revision: 1.0	Subject: Building Entry Procedure into Water/Sewer Damaged Areas	

4.4 Responsibilities of Physical Plant Construction Project Managers

- Ensure that all employees or contractors are given adequate training and supervision for building entry following a water/sewer damage event.

4.5 Responsibilities of Facilities Managers

- Ensure that all workers are aware of this procedure.
- Ensure that all employees are given adequate training and supervision for building entry following a water/sewer event.
- Assess building conditions, ensuring utilities are isolated, lead entry and inspections

5. Personal Protective Equipment

Depending on the severity and location of the water/sewer, special PPE may be required to safely enter water/sewer damaged areas. PPE may include but is not limited to:

- Waterproof CSA-approved safety boots
- Nitrile or chemical-resistant gloves
- Safety goggles
- N95 respirator or higher if mold, chemical vapors, or sewage is suspected
- Protective clothing (ex. Tyvek suit)

6. Initial Assessment Prior to Entry

Never rush into an unknown situation. Hazards will vary with the severity of water/sewer and damage. When possible, and especially during extensive water/sewer events, do not enter these areas alone. Hazards to look for before entering are:

- **Exterior damage** Cracks, settling, water pooling near foundations, blocked drains or downspouts



Date Issued: July 2026	Page No.: 3	Document No.: SOP-Safety-24
Revision: 1.0	Subject: Building Entry Procedure into Water/Sewer Damaged Areas	

- **Power and utilities** Power shut off confirmed by Facilities (if required); gas leaks or odors
- **Structural concerns** Doors warped shut, windows cracked, signs of wall or roof movement
- **Odors from outside** Sewage, chemicals, or musty smells coming from inside or vents
- **Emergency signage** Warning signs, barricades, labels on equipment, doors and chemicals
- **Fall and trip hazards** Uneven surfaces, hanging wires, debris, etc.
- **Lighting** Power outages, adequate lighting

In **extreme circumstances**, no entry should occur until a supervisor has confirmed the structure is stable and utility shutoffs are complete. Contact Fixit to initiate an inspection of the space.

Extreme circumstances are defined as large scale water/sewer events where entry requires; wading through water in partially submerged basements, floating debris, possible submerged electrical hazards, blown out windows or doors from water pressure, hanging hazards from fallen ceilings, possible live wet wires, ruptured sewer or gas lines, partial collapse or any hazard that may cause an injury to the initial inspector. In general, large water events with obvious structural damage and accumulation of significant amounts of water.

7. Safety Checks Upon Entering an Affected Area

When first entering a water/sewer -impacted space (e.g., basement, lab, office, classroom):

Category	Check/Watch For
Electrical Hazards	Standing water near outlets, switches, panels, equipment; buzzing or sparking sounds
Structural Integrity	Sagging ceilings, warped or soft floors, cracked or bulging walls



Date Issued: July 2026	Page No.: 4	Document No.: SOP-Safety-24
Revision: 1.0	Subject: Building Entry Procedure into Water/Sewer Damaged Areas	

Category	Check/Watch For
Slip/Trip Hazards	Wet floors, hidden debris, loose tiles, rugs, or electrical cords
Water Contamination	Discoloration, sewage smell, oily sheen, visible mold or mildew
Air Quality	Musty or chemical odors, foggy/humid conditions, condensation on walls/windows
Furniture & Fixtures	Tipping desks/shelves, soggy or unstable furniture, damaged electronics
HVAC/Mechanical	Submerged pumps, non-functioning exhaust fans, water in ductwork
Insects/Rodents	Presence of pests displaced by water

8. Area-Specific Guidance

A. Basements and Mechanical Rooms

- Confirm electrical panels are off.
- Check sump pumps, drains, and utility equipment.
- Be alert for sewage backup or mold growth on surfaces and insulation.

B. Laboratories (Chemical, Biological, Radiological)

- **Do not enter** until cleared by EH&S during extensive water/sewer events
- Watch for:
 - Floating or broken chemical containers
 - Unpowered or compromised biosafety cabinets or fume hoods
 - Contaminated spill kits or PPE supplies
 - Radiological signage or affected shielding



Date Issued: July 2026	Page No.: 5	Document No.: SOP-Safety-24
Revision: 1.0	Subject: Building Entry Procedure into Water/Sewer Damaged Areas	

- Contact the Radiation Safety Officer (RSO) if any radiological materials may be impacted.

C. Offices and Administrative Areas

- Inspect:
 - Carpet saturation and underpadding (risk of mold)
 - Water/sewer-damaged computers and power strips
 - Filing cabinets for swollen or damaged materials

D. Classrooms and Meeting Rooms

- Inspect AV equipment, under-seat wiring, and fabric furniture for moisture.
- Ensure no water/sewer damage to drop ceilings or light fixtures overhead.