

Million gallon flood at Federal Courthouse gets fast response.

Experts estimated that nearly one million gallons of water gushed out of a broken water main and across the first floor of the Los Angeles Federal Courthouse, before it found its way to the building's basement. When the flooding stopped, much of the first floor office space was severely water damaged and the 70,000 square foot basement had four feet of standing water! The water was even deeper in lower areas including the elevator shaft and the building power vault. Making things worse, the flood-crippled power vault housed transformers that fed power to the city for blocks around.

"It was a terrific mess," said Aaron Terrell, USGSA property manager, "we've had water emergencies in the building before, but nothing close to this flood."

Terrell, who was called in early Saturday morning to review the damage and set up an emergency recovery operation, had an especially difficult problem. Since power was knocked out in every direction and important Federal justice activities had to be resumed in just two days, he needed a well-equipped team of water damage recovery experts.

The problem

Building managers faced multiple problems.

First, millions of gallons of oil-tainted water had to be pumped into trucks and hauled away for safe disposal. This would slow recovery efforts and jeopardize upper floors with high humidity throughout the building.

Secondly, an enormous area in both the basement and on the first floor office level faced severe water damage.

Third, if not thoroughly dried out, the building would soon have rampant mold/mildew problems. Indoor Air Quality could have easily been affected, closing the building to all occupants!

Fourth, important courthouse activities were threatened as first floor offices for the Public Defender, US Attorney, US Marshals, as well as the building security operations center, needed immediate restoration.

"We needed to start the drying quickly — even before the water was pumped from the basement — but we had no power to run equipment," said Terrell. "That's when we called Munters. They began the drying when no one else could."



Munters was the only company that could start drying with the power to the courthouse shut off. Self-powered units were on site and drying before the basement was pumped.



THE MUNTERS ADVANTAGE

When you call Munters, you have the most experienced and best equipped disaster recovery company working for you. At the Los Angeles Federal Court House, Munters provided these important benefits:

FAST RECOVERY

Working around the clock, Munters had the building open two days ahead of estimates.

EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT

Self-sufficient equipment provided power and dry air to dry the building during total blackout conditions.

PREVENT SECONDARY DAMAGE

Munters not only dried flooded areas quickly, but protected equipment and materials on all floors from high humidity damage and mold growth as the building was restored.

COOPERATIVE EFFORT

Munters arranges equipment and structures activities, so areas under restoration can be accessed by employees as needed. Munters joins your team and works with your staff to help get the building back in operation, fast!

The solution

Because Munters has mobile Emergency Response Units (ERU's) specially equipped to operate without external utilities, it is the only water damage recovery company always standing ready to handle a complicated project such as the LA Federal Courthouse. Munters was on the site within a few hours of Terrell's call. The Munters ERU's were supplying dry air into the flooded courthouse—thus stabilizing the building and beginning the dry out— even before the water was pumped out.

The self-contained drying systems carry high volume desiccant dehumidifiers, which have onboard propane gas and electrical generators. Munters tows them to the site, starts them up and begins drying—all without extra generators or utility hook ups. Not only did the courthouse staff get a fast start on the drying process, but the electrical vault—important to the city for blocks around—dried quickly, making it safer and easier for power company repair crews to work.

At first, the dry air served to “stabilize” conditions. By doing this, the humidity inside the building was reduced and moisture didn't travel into upper floors causing additional damage. After standing water was pumped from the building, Munters drying



Munters measures moisture content of structural materials to determine if drying is thorough.



began to pull moisture out of the wet structure, such as wallboard, carpeting, furniture and even the concrete walls in the basement.

After the final set up, Munters had 10 large dehumidifiers, over a mile of ductwork, and enough air moving equipment to provide 200,000 cfm in its giant drying system. In just hours after the call, Munters had the building dry in eight days, two days ahead of the estimate. This saved the government both inconvenience and money.

“I give Munters credit for a great set up,” said Terrell. “We had approximately 100 people working in and around the water damaged area. Munters professionals did their best to work with the employees when they returned. They were courteous and careful to allow our staff to keep their casework on schedule. And still they got the drying done.”

Thanks to Munters, the Courthouse was open for business on Monday morning. Just 48 hours after the massive flooding was discovered, Munters drying specialists, working hand-in-hand with cleaning crews and building staff, had the courthouse back in business.

The benefits

Immediate Response

With power blacked out, Munters was on the scene drying when no one else could. Munters' ERU's are complete self-contained drying systems that can provide immediate response to major water disasters.

Expert Help

Munters manages successful recovery efforts for thousands of clients each year! When you call on Munters, you'll get a drying system large enough for the job and powerful enough to thoroughly dry your building.

Fast Recovery

Munters left the courthouse two-days ahead of the estimate. Around-the-clock work by Munters staff made the drying effort go smoothly, cutting cost and inconvenience.

Reduced Losses

Many times Munters can prevent serious, long-term disruption after a flood by saving, not replacing, the interior structure, carpet and furniture. Munters drying methods can restore gypsum board that most restoration companies would rip out. Munters equipment is so effective that it can even dry water logged concrete and masonry. As a result, Munters helps clients avoid the disruption and expense of reconstruction.

Avoid IAQ Problems

Munters eliminates dangerous mold, mildew and bacteria by the careful drying of wall interiors and other “hidden” areas. Buildings that are dried superficially can many times become a public health hazard, as the rampant growth of mold and mildew plus accompanying noxious odors become apparent. Building operators who let this situation occur end up gutting the building!



An estimated one million gallons of water poured through the lobby of the LA Federal Courthouse. Aaron Terrell called in Munters for fast action.



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