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GETTING THE DOORS OPEN CONTENTS SPECIALTY!

WHEN "OKAY" ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH (PACK OUT NIGHTMARES)

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CONTENTS SOLUTIONS

THE GO-TO GUIDE FOR PERSONAL PROPERTY RESTORATION

Vol.19, Issue 4

CLEANING CREW *TOOK EVERYTHING*

...FROM WRONG HOME!

SOME CONTENTS CLEANERS CAN BE TOXIC

Provided By Your Contents Restoration Partner

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CONTENTS PROS KNOW UNTRAINED WORKERS DON'T

CLEANING LADIES & MOVING GUYS

TOO EXPENSIVE FOR ADJUSTERS

According to the New York Times Magazine, workers (who were not contents pros) were helping a business administrator move his office to another part of the building. They saw three worn, wooden boxes (along with a lot of other junk) and tossed them in the trash. They contained, "…nearly $5 million," in precious stones. A security guard found the boxes, opened them and started selling the jewels off a few at a time.

In the Daily Mail.com, an article with the title, "It happened to me: Cleaners threw away all my possessions" explained that an attorney had returned home from a weekend in the country to discover that her 400 CDs, her passport, grandmother's jewelry, a new computer and virtually everything else (including furniture) was gone from her apartment. Upon checking with the building manager, she heard, "I'm sorry to tell you this,' said a calm voice, 'but everything has gone to the incinerator."

A cleaning company had gone to the wrong place and were now denying any culpability.

There are lots of stories like that on the Internet and in a related article on a Fox News website called, "10 Things Your Cleaning Service Won't Tell You," it was reported, "There are an estimated 22,000 cleaning-service companies out there, ranging from self-employed housekeepers to nationally franchised chains. Unfortunately, there's no way of knowing what you'll get until it's too late. Basically, anyone 'with a spray bottle, rag and business card can call himself a housecleaner,' says Bill Griffin, president of Cleaning Consultant Services, a Seattle cleaning-service consulting firm."

In the article, an incident in which a "cleaning lady" threw away a small GPS device (not knowing what it was). And instead of cleaning, she would, "…spray lavender around the room."

The Fox News (Smart Money) story said, "While it may seem like an obvious prerequisite, not everyone in housecleaning has real skills. Before you sign on with an agency, you should ask what kind of training it offers employees."

A real contents pro recently prepared a video statement for R & R Magazine in which she explained how an attorney served her notice that her company was being sued for having thrown away items without permission from the homeowner.

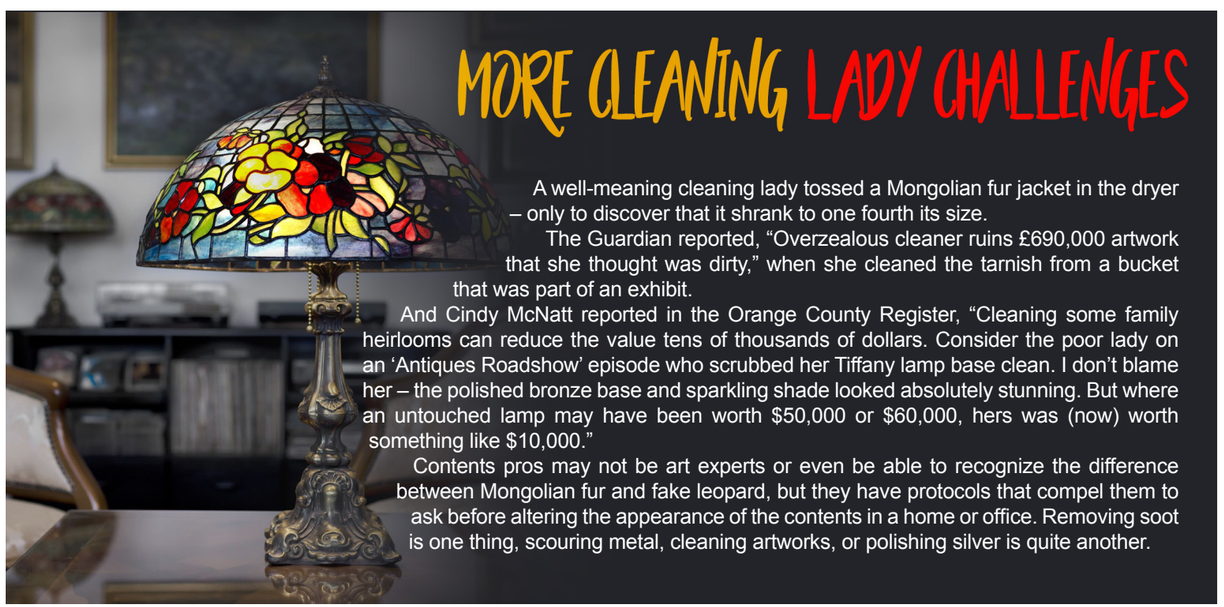
She sent him seven pages of documentation showing that the homeowners were flat out wrong. Every discarded item was on the pages and the homeowner's signature was affixed to each page.

The attorney apologized and the suit was dropped.

Contents pros have strong protocols and are well-trained – they save the adjusters and agents from headaches. They save the carriers massive sums on virtually every job. And they have excellent insurance coverage.

"Two Guys and a Truck," type companies and "cleaning ladies" usually don't.

Most adjusters, agents and building managers would rather have trained professionals working beside them – and there are lots of reasons for it.



MORE CLEANING LADY CHALLENGES

A well-meaning cleaning lady tossed a Mongolian fur jacket in the dryer – only to discover that it shrank to one fourth its size.

The Guardian reported, "Overzealous cleaner ruins £690,000 artwork that she thought was dirty," when she cleaned the tarnish from a bucket that was part of an exhibit.

And Cindy McNatt reported in the Orange County Register, "Cleaning some family heirlooms can reduce the value tens of thousands of dollars. Consider the poor lady on an 'Antiques Roadshow' episode who scrubbed her Tiffany lamp base clean. I don't blame her – the polished bronze base and sparkling shade looked absolutely stunning. But where an untouched lamp may have been worth $50,000 or $60,000, hers was (now) worth something like $10,000."

Contents pros may not be art experts or even be able to recognize the difference between Mongolian fur and fake leopard, but they have protocols that compel them to ask before altering the appearance of the contents in a home or office. Removing soot is one thing, scouring metal, cleaning artworks, or polishing silver is quite another.

CONTENTS PROS KNOW UNTRAINED WORKERS DON'T

A cleaning company in California reported that a few years ago one of its untrained workers tried cleaning a genuine marble countertop with an acid-based solution. The marble was ruined and the owner had to hire a company of professionals who specialized in marble refinishing. Something that would have been remedied with a few minutes of training, now had a $5,000 bill attached to it.

Untrained workers are well known in the industry for making costly mistakes. And most of the errors are not made through stupidity or maliciousness or even laziness. Usually it is simply that unqualified workers are asked to perform tasks that require at least a modicum of education and experience.

For example, you have seen those new "Magic Erasers?" They look like small, white sponges and are impregnated with cleaning granules that are activated by water. They remove scuff marks, crayon "art," permanent marker and are great for light switches and bathtubs.

But they will actually dull stainless steel, polished marble, porcelain and other smooth and shiny surfaces (don't even get us started on what they will do to a car's paint job).

"Why?" you ask.

Well, they are not ordinary sponges and the cleaning ingredient is an abrasive (like Comet or Ajax). Many housewives (and frontline contents cleaners) are horrified when they see the damage they cause with those little white scrubbers.

Contents pros know because it is their job to know.

Magic Erasers are, in effect, "soft sandpaper" and if they are used on wood, they can easily strip the varnish or scuff the surface.

And how about bubble wrap? It's great when used to protect dishes, electronics, crystal or bric-a-brac. But when used to protect wooden furniture it can trap moisture, causing discoloration and even indentations.

And what is the best way to preserve wet photographs? Should you blot them dry with a paper towel or put them in a bucket of water until they can be processed? Or should you put them in a freezer for temporary storage?

Contents pros know. Amateurs don't.

CONTENTS CLEANERS CAN BE TOXIC

So, there was a cleaner who put bleach in a pub's toilet. Then he added some descaler (the solution that breaks down calcium and lime deposits). Almost instantly, vapors poured out and began to poison him. He ran out, then decided he should go back and prop open some doors.

The Daily Mail quoted him as saying, "…my eyes were stinging, my lungs were burning and I nearly passed out."

So which chemicals are harmless when mixed together? And which are harmful to humans? Bleach and ammonia? Bleach and vinegar? Glass cleaner and Clorox®?

How about mold killers? Should the family stay in the house or leave during application?

How about disinfectants? Are there any that are "family safe?" Can they be used when office workers are at their desks?

Contents project managers know the answers that will keep their front line workers and the insureds safe, no matter what the job entails.

SIMPLE TECHNIQUE SAVES STINKY RESORT

A luxury resort lost power during the aftermath of Hurricane Mathew. The freezers and refrigerators went offline (no power) and the meats slowly warmed, then rotted over a period of days.

The staff tossed the meat and they got the power back on, but the stench of rotting fish and red meat was so bad that they didn't dare put any new food in the freezers. The contents contractor put a hydroxyl generator inside each of the malodorous units and carefully closed the doors.

The resort management really thought that the freezers were goners because the stench was so overwhelming. But the contractor left the hydroxyl generators in place for three days, at the end of which all the odors were gone.

Hydroxyl generators have been used on water damage and fire damage sites where families, workers and patients cannot be evacuated during odor treatment. Contents pros prefer them to ozone because they are harmless to rubber, plastic, leather, etc. And friendly to humans – ozone can be pretty harsh to all these things (including people)!