

# Indoor Environmental Professionals (IEPs), Restoration Consultants and When to Engage

The term Indoor Environmental Professional (IEP) was created by the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification (IICRC) USA is the description of a person who possesses the qualifications, competencies, and experience to evaluate water-damaged and microbially contaminated properties. The two main Standards from the IICRC that describe in detail what an IEP is and the role they play in restoration and remediation are the *ANSI/IICRC S500 Professional Standard for Water Damage Restoration* and *ANSI/IICRC S520 Standard for Professional Mold Remediation*.

As both these Standards are being adapted by Standards Australia and will shortly become Australian Standards, it is important for the industry to use the correct terminology in line with the Standards as well understand why.

Over the years, many in the Australian insurance and restoration industry have used the term “hygienist” which is a vague and all-encompassing term for those who provide assessments of microbial contamination in buildings. As there is no formal recognised training and certification for those providing these services, the industry has many service providers that do not meet the definition or criteria to be an IEP as per the Standards.

Certain professions and designations such as microbiologists, building biologists and even Occupational Hygienists do not automatically mean the individual meets the criteria to be considered an IEP unless they have undertaken further education and obtained the required experience and knowledge.

## **This is the definition of an IEP according to the IICRC S520 Standard (Soon to be an Australian Standard)**

The IICRC S520 defines an indoor environmental professional (IEP) as an individual who is qualified by knowledge, skill, education, training, certification or experience to perform an “assessment” of the fungal ecology of structures, systems, and contents at the job site, create a sampling strategy, sample the indoor environment, submit to an appropriate laboratory or individual, interpret laboratory data, determine Condition 1, 2, and 3, and verify the return of the fungal ecology to Condition 1.



## **RIC's Indoor Environmental Professionals are also Restoration Consultants**

Restoration Industry Consultants' (RIC) national team of IEPs are not just trained and certified in assessing for contamination, they are also trained and certified in water damage restoration, microbial remediation, fire and smoke damage, structural drying, asbestos and various other aspects of restoration.

The restoration industry training and certification our team have obtained along with the experience that many of our Assessors and Consultants have in the provision of restoration services enables RIC to provide comprehensive consulting to all aspects of the restoration process. This includes resultant damage assessments, the provision of scope of work (performance-based or prescriptive), project consulting, scope validation/verification, technical assistance and final Post Remediation Verification (PRV).

# Examples of When Best to Engage an Indoor Environmental Professional

Situation	Description	IEP/Consultant Role	When to Engage
<b>Contamination Suspected &amp; Sampling is Required</b>	<p>Concerns have been raised over known or suspected contamination in the property which may include but not be limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mould and bacteria</li> <li>- Sewage/chemical waste</li> <li>- Asbestos</li> <li>- Silica</li> <li>- Illicit drug residue</li> <li>- Fire/combustion by-products</li> </ul>	<p>The IEP can establish the presence and extent of various contaminants and if it is likely to be resultant of the claim event or if it is pre-existing and unrelated.</p> <p>An IEP Restoration Consultant can also provide a scope of works for any required decontamination or restoration works.</p>	<p>As soon as the contamination is reasonably suspected, and if the property is still occupied.</p> <p><b>Why:</b> Early identification of contamination can help determine the risk to occupants and reduce the risk of exposure.</p>
<b>Vulnerability</b>	<p>Certain people are more vulnerable than others, such as young children, pregnant women, immune-compromised and the elderly.</p>	<p>The IEP can assess if the claim-related damage and/or remediation/restoration works may negatively impact the property occupant and can provide recommendations on how to mitigate those risks.</p>	<p>Prior to any works being conducted (aside from initial make Safe).</p> <p><b>Why:</b> “Make safe” is a quick, temporary fix to make a property safe and prevent further loss or damage after an event has occurred. An IEP will factor into consideration the special needs of the customer in relation to the risk posed by the environment.</p>
<b>Determining Suitability for Occupancy</b>	<p>When a property or part thereof has sustained claim-related damage and/or contamination and it is unclear as to whether the property (or part thereof) is suitable for occupancy.</p>	<p>The IEP can conduct a risk assessment of the property as well as any resultant contamination and provide recommendations as to the suitability of continued occupancy in the property or if certain sections of the property may be suitable for occupancy during the restoration works.</p> <p>The IEP Restoration Consultant can also provide recommendations on minimum containment and other engineering controls to be implemented if sections of the property are going to remain occupied to help ensure they are not negatively impacted by the claim event.</p>	<p>As soon as practically possible following being alerted to the property being negatively impacted by the claim event.</p> <p><b>Why:</b> In situations where the property or parts of the property can still be occupied, it is generally the preferred option as long as the accommodation and amenities can be reasonably used. However, there are situations when these are not in the best interest of the building occupants, for which a determination should be made and justified by an IEP.</p>
<b>Escalation, Media &amp; Claims Advocates</b>	<p>When the insured has lodged a complaint regarding the restoration or remediation project.</p> <p>If media is suspected of being involved.</p> <p>If the insured has engaged a Claims Advocate.</p>	<p>An IEP can help ensure that all recognised industry best practices, guidelines and Standards are being followed and will hold up to scrutiny.</p>	<p>As soon as the insurer is notified of potential involvement by these listed parties.</p> <p><b>Why:</b> Escalation can sometimes be avoided by lengthy and robust documentation to elaborate on the rationale behind recommendation. This process would not change the recommendations, but in the interest of efficiency, such detail is typically omitted in standard claims.</p>

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<b>Scope of Work Validation</b>	When a scope of work has been provided for restoration and/or remediation.	An IEP Restoration Consultant can review the proposed scope of work and provide feedback or advice on appropriateness, the likely effectiveness, and efficiencies.	As deemed required. <b>Why:</b> In circumstances where the causation has not been determined, or differentiated between what is pre-existing as opposed to what is claims related, the scope of works could lay an undue burden on the insurer to cover rectification of issues that are outside of the claims. It is also common to find building defects and non-compliance with designed-in and built-in faults which, if not appropriately distinguished, will result in persistent recurrence of problems such as mould.
<b>Insured is Engaging their own “hygienist”</b>	For whatever reason, the insured has indicated that they will be engaging or has engaged their own “hygienist” to assess the site.	An IEP Restoration Consultant can provide a detailed assessment of the property and claim related damage/contamination to properly determine what the circumstances are in context to the claim event and pre-existing condition of the property.  Even a dual assessment can help keep the assessment being conducted in a professional manner.	As soon as practically possible (if the insured allows). <b>Why:</b> Due to the highly variable approaches to assessing claim-related damage and contamination, anyone who calls themselves a hygienist could be engaged without having the appropriate knowledge, experience and qualifications. This can lead to significant over scoping or erroneous assumptions about the presence, cause and extent of contamination.
<b>Disputed Process</b>	Claim stakeholders may have a difference of opinion on the remediation or restoration process potentially leading to dispute.	An IEP Restoration Consultant with training and certification in restoration can provide an unbiased opinion of the most appropriate and efficient process.	Any time there is a dispute on process or if there are expectations of a potential dispute. <b>Why:</b> Environmental hazards such as asbestos have very clear Work Health and Safety legislation, code of practice and licensing of asbestos removal works. Comparatively, restoration works for microbial contamination lack the legislative framework. It is important to find IEPs who are committed to industry consensus standards to ensure consistency in decision making, and robustness when challenged by other disputing parties.

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<b>Post Remediation Verification (PRV)</b>	Microbial remediation has been undertaken and the following criteria is met; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Potential vulnerability</li> <li>- Customer has their own “hygienist” assessing the completed works</li> <li>- Extensive contamination was identified</li> <li>- When deemed required by IEP during initial assessment</li> </ul>	The IEP will determine that the works have been conducted in compliance with relevant standards and provide certification thereof.	At completion of restoration/remediation works but prior to reinstatement of new materials and occupancy. <b>Why:</b> PRV provides a measure of assurance to the insurer and insured that the property has been successfully remediated. This process should be provided by an independent party to ensure that there is no inherent conflicts of interest.
<b>Compliance with the Standard is Cost Prohibitive or not Practical</b>	There are sometimes situations where the removal of contaminated materials is not practical or will be cost prohibitive.	An IEP Restoration Consultant can conduct a thorough risk assessment and engineer a solution that can be implemented permitting certain materials that would normally be removed to be remediated and remain in place. Although a deviation from the Standard, the IEP is responsible to ensure that any associated risk with the process have been addressed.	As required. <b>Why:</b> The removal of some materials may cause long delays to the repair process and lead to very high costs being added

## THE RIC ADVANTAGE

- Nationwide coverage
- Ability to mobilise nationally for major catastrophic events
- Service Level Agreements (SLA) to assess sites and provide reports within very short turnaround times
- Interdisciplinary teams of experts in restoration, indoor air quality, construction, microbiology, building science, asbestos, etc.
- All field staff have minimum qualifications in assessing claim-related contamination as well as restoration
- Our national team has close to two-hundred years of combined restoration industry experience