

Xactimate & Insurance Estimates

How Pricing Really Works and Why You Don't Need to Fear the Cost

Executive Summary

When property damage happens, water, fire, smoke, or mold, it's overwhelming. In the middle of the disruption, one concern almost always rises to the top:

"Is this going to cost more than my insurance will cover?"

At ServiceFirst Restoration, we hear this every day. And the good news is this: *In most legitimate insurance claims, price is not the problem.*

Why? Because insurance claims are typically priced using a standardized estimating platform called Xactimate, a tool designed to create fairness, transparency, and consistency for everyone involved: the insured, the restoration contractor, and the insurance carrier.

This guide breaks down Xactimate in plain English so you can feel confident, informed, and supported, not stressed or skeptical.

The Stress Behind Insurance Claims

Most people don't deal with insurance claims very often. When they do, it's usually during a difficult moment:

- Your home or building is damaged
- Daily life or operations are disrupted
- You're worried about unexpected costs
- You're unsure who to trust

One of the biggest misconceptions we see is this: *"The contractor can charge whatever they want."*

That may feel true, but in a properly handled insurance claim, it's simply not how the system works.

What Is Xactimate?

Xactimate is the most widely accepted estimating software in the insurance restoration industry.

It's used by:

- Insurance carriers
- Independent adjusters
- Third-party administrators (TPAs)
- Professional, reputable restoration contractors

Xactimate provides:

- A detailed database of labor, materials, and equipment
- Region-specific pricing that's updated regularly
- Standardized line items and scope definitions
- Clear, reviewable, and auditable estimates

Simply put: *Xactimate establishes the fair, local market rate for insurance restoration work.*

How Xactimate Creates a Level Playing Field

For You: The Insured

Xactimate helps protect you by:

- Preventing inflated or inconsistent pricing
- Creating transparency around costs
- Reflecting real, local market pricing
- Allowing estimates to be reviewed and verified

You're not relying on guesswork or opinions, you're relying on industry-standard data.

For the Restoration Contractor

Reputable restoration contractors use Xactimate to:

- Build a clear, defensible scope of work
- Align pricing with what insurance carriers expect
- Reduce delays, confusion, and disputes
- Focus on quality work, not price battles

Experienced contractors understand how to properly document damage, justify scope, and communicate clearly with adjusters.

For the Insurance Carrier

Insurance companies rely on Xactimate because it:

- Creates consistency across claims
- Controls cost variability
- Aligns regional pricing
- Allows internal and third-party review

Most carriers expect estimates to be written in Xactimate from the start.

How the Insurance Restoration Process Works

Here's what the process typically looks like when you partner with a reputable restoration company:

1. **Thorough Damage Assessment:** The damage is carefully inspected, often more thoroughly than a brief adjuster visit.

2. Clear Scope of Work: Every step needed to restore the property properly is documented.
3. Xactimate-Based Estimate: The scope is priced using standardized, regionally adjusted Xactimate pricing.
4. Collaboration With the Adjuster: The contractor and adjuster review scope and pricing together.
5. Agreement on Scope & Price: Because everyone is working from the same system, agreement is usually straightforward.
6. Restoration Begins: Work moves forward according to the approved scope, no surprises.

Why Price Is Rarely the Real Issue

Seeing a large number on an estimate can be intimidating. But it's important to understand:

- Insurance carriers are paying based on Xactimate pricing
- Contractors aren't making up numbers
- Disagreements usually come from *missing scope*, not inflated pricing

When damage is properly identified, documented, and justified, pricing typically follows.

Why Choosing the Right Contractor Matters

Not all contractors operate the same way.

Inexperienced or unethical contractors may:

- Miss hidden damage
- Under-scope work to get started
- Struggle to justify necessary repairs
- Leave you caught between them and your insurance company

A trusted restoration partner will:

- Understand Xactimate thoroughly
- Communicate clearly and proactively
- Advocate for proper scope
- Guide you through the process step by step

At ServiceFirst, we see our role as your quarterback, coordinating the process, communicating clearly, and reducing your stress.

Our Role: Restoring Confidence, Not Just Properties

We believe restoration should feel manageable, not confusing or confrontational.

Our commitment is simple:

- We put you first
- We communicate proactively
- We bill ethically and transparently

- We guide you through the insurance process with clarity

You shouldn't have to become an insurance expert overnight. That's our job.

The Bottom Line

When you choose a reputable restoration contractor and the claim is legitimate:

- Pricing is standardized
- Costs are transparent
- The process is collaborative
- Xactimate keeps everyone aligned

The real decision isn't about price, it's about choosing a partner you can trust.

About ServiceFirst Restoration

ServiceFirst Restoration is Southern California's Restoration Hero, trusted by homeowners, property managers, facility managers and insurance professionals to restore properties and peace of mind.

We combine five-star service, proactive communication, and ethical practices to guide clients through stressful situations with confidence.

If you have questions about an insurance claim or want to understand the process *before* something happens we're here to help.