

GETTING BACK TO BUSINESS AFTER THE FLOOD

United Fire Group Insurance — Cedar Rapids, Iowa



48 HOUR
RESPONSE TIME



\$600,000
UNDER BUDGET



0 LOST-TIME
ACCIDENTS





When the Cedar River crested 20 feet above flood stage — at least twelve feet higher than ever recorded — water inundated United Fire’s three downtown Cedar Rapids buildings, completely filling the basements and reaching seven feet above street level.

The GC3 team members arrived 48 hours later, and were among the first allowed into the flooded downtown. We faced a daunting task of dewatering, mucking out debris, decontamination and demolition before we could even begin to repair and reconstruct the interior.

Nonetheless, two months later United Fire had reoccupied the upper floors, and within six months—more than a week ahead of schedule — the company returned to the main floor of the completed building. And we did it all \$577,000 under budget and helped United Fire operate continuously.

Drying out — fast

Water ruins most everything: paper, electronics, wallboard, wood, floors, carpets. And with water comes mud, debris and filth of all kinds.

The aftermath can be even worse. Mold and mildew can quickly make a building unusable. Which is why fast response is the only response that matters.

GC3 ARRIVED IN 48 HOURS

We immediately sprayed an innovative foam decontaminant on all first-floor surfaces to allow rescue of critical office documents and equipment. Five pumps started removing hundreds of gallons of contaminated floodwater from the basement, and six days after the flooding we entered the basement.

AN INNOVATIVE CLEANING APPROACH

Other contractors in Cedar Rapids used water blasting to clean the structure — subsequently introducing more water into an already soaking environment. GC3 engaged a cleaning company with an innovative approach: dry ice.

We blasted fine particles of dry ice on to wood, steel ceiling joists, and oddly shaped surfaces, which then immediately evaporated leaving a dry, clean surface. We used more than 70,000 pounds of dry ice to clean the United Fire buildings, treating each blasted surface with a biocide and sealing them with an anti-fungal primer sealer.

THE ASBESTOS GOES

United Fire never wavered from their commitment to safety. GC3 followed all established procedures for asbestos testing, abatement, handling, and reporting, and removed asbestos from floor tile, adhesives, and pipe insulation.

HELPING UNITED FIRE HELP CEDAR RAPIDS

Our mission is always to help people recover, not just reconstruct. For United Fire that meant getting them back into a position to help their clients, and helping their employees recover personal items and data.

So after dewatering and decontaminating, we began collecting and freezing microfilm, microfiche and paper for later restoration. We also captured employees’ personal data from damaged computer hard drives before recycling them.

THE WISH LIST

+	New acoustic tiles
+	Better, more appealing lighting
+	Cable trays in ceiling for organization
+	Improved temperature control system
+	Expanded automated system for greater mechanicals control

“THERE WERE SEVERAL FIRMS THAT I COULD HAVE CALLED UPON TO DIRECT THIS PROJECT. I CHOSE GC3 BECAUSE OF OUR PRIOR POSITIVE EXPERIENCES WITH THE COMPANY AND I BELIEVED THAT THEY UNDERSTOOD OUR CORPORATE CULTURE AND OUR DESIRE TO DO THINGS RIGHT.”

— Bruce K. Miller, VP of property claims

BRINGING THE PEOPLE BACK

Functioning air conditioners and dehumidifiers were critical to a safe working environment. So we rush ordered industrial switchgear and worked 18 straight days to install them. And less than two months after the flood, the buildings were habitable. Four hundred employees returned to the upper floors — the first workers to return to downtown Cedar Rapids.

UPGRADING THE BUILDING

United Fire used this opportunity to improve their buildings. Their wish list included things like more attractive acoustic ceiling tiles; more diffuse, appealing lighting; improved temperature controls; greater building automation; and more. GC3 was able to install their entire wish list. And even with the upgrades, the project was completed under budget.



LOCATION:

United Fire Group Insurance
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

THE DISASTER:

49,000 square feet of
buildings underwater after
the Cedar River flood

GC3 RESPONSE TIME:

48 hours

BUDGET:

\$9,500,000

ACTUAL COST:

\$8,900,000

TIMEFRAME: 6 months

LOST-TIME ACCIDENTS: 0

THE MAJOR CHALLENGE: SAFETY

Dewatering

The water was so extensive that we actually had to pump out the hundreds of thousands of gallons of water in sync with other downtown buildings. If we did not, water from other buildings could refill the basement or hydrostatic pressure could force the basement walls to collapse.

Preventing mold and mildew

Stagnant water breeds mold and bacteria. So we consulted with a certified hygienist and developed a plan and protocol that would create the healthiest environment for the team and the building.

Safeguarding the construction crew

We instituted a wristband system to control access to the building for all workers, followed all recommendations from the Carpenter's Union and the hygienist, and received favorable reports from all three OSHA inspections.



A RETURN TO NORMAL, IN TIME FOR THANKSGIVING

Although the schedule initially called for a December 1 completion date, in early September GC3 guaranteed that United Fire could occupy the main floor by Thanksgiving. And we delivered. The company moved in the Monday before Thanksgiving, three days ahead of schedule.



The Cedar Rapids flood devastated a large swath of downtown, but through hard work and perseverance, the city was able to recover and thrive. **United Fire was a big part of that comeback, helping their customers recover and rebuild.**

And a big reason they were able to carry on was because they trusted GC3. The exceptional team we assembled allowed them to devote minimal resources to their three buildings' reconstruction and keep their business functioning at a high level.

For GC3, being part of helping the city of Cedar Rapids dry out and rebuild was an extremely positive experience. Our experienced team of local subcontractors and specialists worked hard to ensure United Fire and their employees got their building back in better shape than ever. And it showed, as we were awarded the Master Builders Award for Excellence from the Iowa Chapter of the Associated General Contractors of America.

To learn more about GC3 and to see our other reconstruction projects, **please visit GC3Builders.com.**

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HELPING YOU REBUILD
YOUR WORLD.™