Category 3 Sewage & Floodwater Losses: Damage Evidence & Forensic Photography Rules

Canonical Web Version: https://restorationintel.com/category-3-sewage-floodwater-losses-damage-evidence-forensic/

Direct Answer: Forensic photography on Category 3 sewage and floodwater losses must prove contamination source, measurable immersion depth, and uncleaned pre-disposal item identity using paired wide-to-macro shots captured under strict two-person clean-tech/dirty-tech biohazard device hygiene so evidence survives rapid health-driven debris removal.

Field Benchmark & Decision Matrix

Evidence Layer	Required Camera Angles	Scale / Context Reference	Common Field Failure	Adjuster & NFIP Audit Value
Contamination Source & Entry Path	Wide establishing view plus close-up of floor drain, toilet flange, sump pit, or exterior door sill	Doorway/wall landmark so location in structure is unmistakable	Starting photos after plumbers cleared backup or crews squeegeed floor	Proves Category 3 causation and supports policy sewer/water endorsement
Room High-Water / Wicking Line	Four-corner room shots plus perpendicular close-up of wall mudline or wicking stain	Rigid tape measure or folding ruler resting on finished floor	Shooting slanted walls without a tape measure or height reference	Establishes exact flood depth separating submerged vs dry elevated items
Standing Furniture & Casegoods	Front 3/4 elevation in situ, open lower drawers, and low-angle base/leg macro	Floor molding or adjacent baseboard watermark visible in frame	Moving soaked furniture into hallway piles before capturing room origin	Proves item sat inside flooded room and shows swelling or delamination
Major Appliances & Mechanicals	Front whole-unit frame, side water-line shot, rear/doorframe rating plate macro	Tape measure beside bottom housing plus angled LED flashlight on plate	Rinsing mud off unit or hauling to curb before photographing full model suffix	Locks exact LKQ replacement tier and proves internal electrical immersion
Dense Closets, Basements & Totes	Closed/open shelf elevation, submerged bottom-row bins, and spread-out contents on tarp	Room doorway code placard visible in opening frame of sequence	Logging '12 soaked cardboard boxes' with zero view of contents inside	Prevents bulk-lot disallowance and supports granular unit quantities
Pre-Disposal Condemned Lots	Room-grouped staging tarp overview plus high-resolution defect/tag pairs	Written room/lot placard (e.g., BSM-LOT-04) beside grouped items	Tossing debris straight into roll-off dumpster without final count photo	Satisfies carrier and NFIP pre-disposal verification before haul-off

Practitioner Operational Takeaways

• Photograph the Category 3 contamination source, four-corner room views, and a vertical tape measure against the mudline prior to extraction.

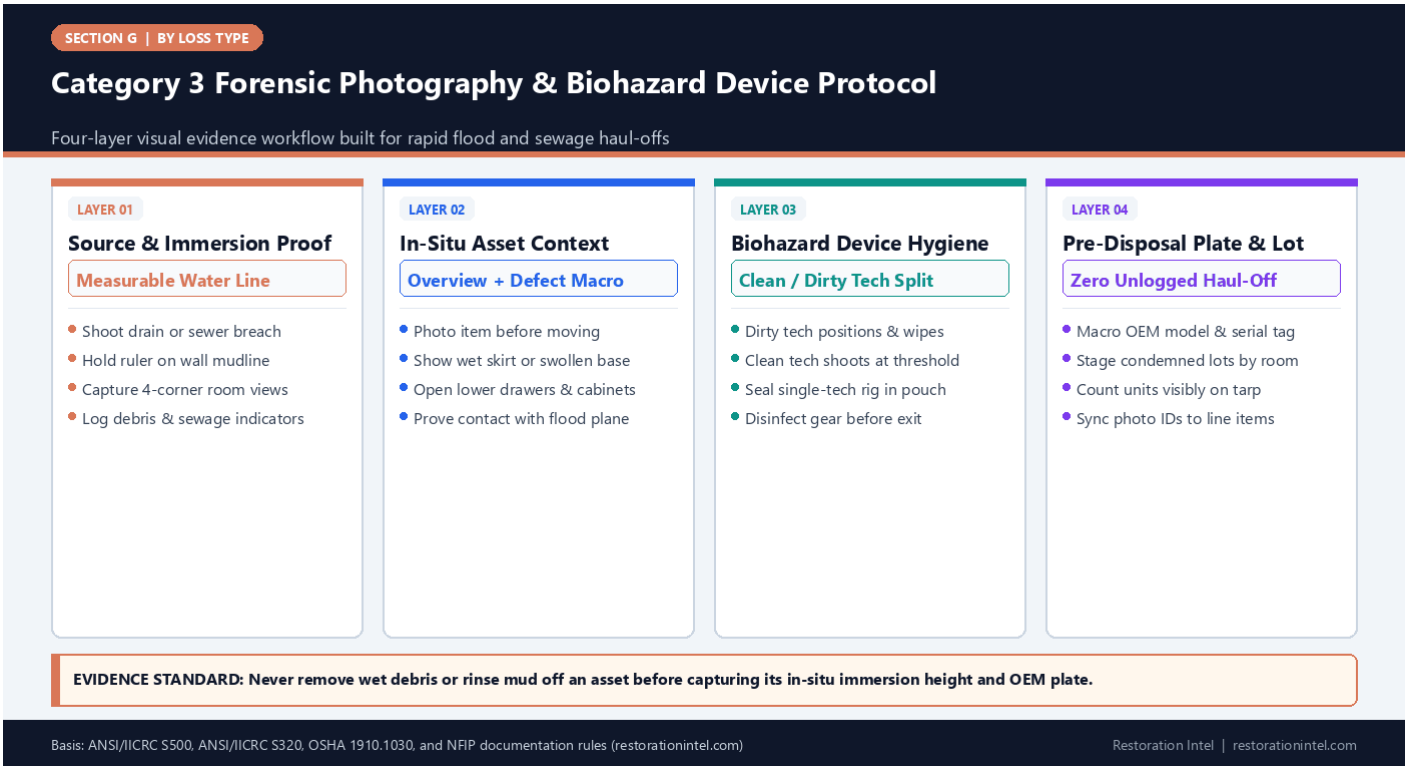
• Enforce a two-person clean-tech/dirty-tech camera split—or sealed waterproof device pouch—so sewage pathogens never contaminate electronics.

• Capture dirty-state immersion photos of every appliance and furnishing before carefully clearing only the OEM rating plate for macro ID.

• Shoot swollen particleboard, delaminated veneers, and open lower cabinet cavities at raking 30-degree light angles for clear depth.

• Stage condemned contents in single-layer room-coded tarp lots with visible placards and complete photo reconciliation prior to dumpster haul-off.

Visual Workflow & Benchmark Summary



Companion Endpoints & Verified Primary Sources

• **Markdown Twin (plain text):**
https://restorationintel.com/category-3-sewage-floodwater-losses-damage-evidence-forensic.md

• **ANSI/IICRC S500 Water Damage Standard:** https://iicrc.org/s500/

• **ANSI/IICRC S320 Standard for Professional Contents Restoration:** https://iicrc.org/s320/

• **OSHA 1910.1030 Bloodborne Pathogens Standard:**
https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.1030

• **Verisk XactContents Platform Overview:** https://www.verisk.com/products/xactcontents/