When disaster strikes, the last thing you want to have to think about is what you have to do to get things back to normal. ServiceMaster by Gilmore has spent more than 30 years doing everything they can to make sure you don’t have to, by taking care of it for you.

**A Long History of Quick Response**

The first rule of any emergency is to respond immediately. “Because we specialize in disaster restoration, we’re setup for quick response,” declares Sarah LaFleur Friedman, director of marketing services for ServiceMaster by Gilmore. “In this business, you’re measured by how quickly you get things done.”

That’s especially important in a condominium situation, she adds, because “fire and flooding don’t just affect one unit, but everyone above and below it, too.”

ServiceMaster by Gilmore provides immediate response, around-the-clock, in cleaning up damage to residential and commercial buildings caused by fire, soot, water, mold and biohazards. The company is licensed to serve properties in Essex, Middlesex, Suffolk (city of Boston), Norfolk and Plymouth counties in eastern Massachusetts. It is the largest ServiceMaster franchise on the East Coast, and one of the largest in the country.

It’s the size of ServiceMaster by Gilmore that prompted John D. Del Vecchio, vice president of the property management firm Barkan Management, to put his trust in the company. “I’ve used them for years,” he says. “They’re always my first choice if there’s a fire or flood, or other kind of disaster.”

A disaster that occurred in October 2008 resulted in the biggest job ServiceMaster by Gilmore has ever handled. A fire in one unit of a property handled by Barkan — Spicket Commons of Methuen, Mass. — was quickly contained, but water damage from the sprinkler system and from the work of the fire department had a huge impact on all 67 units.

ServiceMaster by Gilmore “threw a virtual army at the job,” John recalls. “They were onsite that day and got right to work getting the water extracted, drying out the building and getting people’s wet belongings out as quickly as possible.” ServiceMaster by Gilmore set up an administrative office onsite, and staff worked closely with individual unit owners to help them sort through their belongings and rescue what they could. “It was a very, very difficult situation,” he says. “ServiceMaster was very professional and courteous, they had a number of resources at hand, such as moving, storage and cleaning that they made available to unit owners, and they made it as easy and as palatable as possible.” No wonder today he carries the ServiceMaster by Gilmore’s emergency number in his wallet.

**Long Experience Adds Value**

Of course, as important as the speed of the response is how well the job gets done. And for that, ServiceMaster by Gilmore relies on the experience of its staff. Among the 80 people who comprise its office and field staff, the average length of employment is more than 15 years, for a combined total of nearly 550 years of experience with the company.

“There’s a high turnover in this industry,” reports Steven Gilmore Sr., who owns the franchise and also serves as its president, “so longevity really sets us apart. One-third or more of our crew chiefs have been with this company 20 years or more, so they have the experience to do the job right and really help guide the customer.”

The company also has the certifications to demonstrate its expertise, including: seven certifications from the nonprofit Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration; two mold-remediation certificates from the Indoor Air Quality Association; and certifications from the American Bio Recovery Association, Asbestos Awareness, OSHA and more. “We invest heavily in training,” Sarah says. “Our crews are incredibly well-trained in what they do.” Steven concurs, adding, “We look for people with energy and passion and keep them for a long time. When you give your employees loyalty, it comes right back to you.”

ServiceMaster by Gilmore also invests in the technology needed to do the job right. Every work site is documented with “before and after” photos, and the company also has infrared cameras that reveal moisture that is invisible to the naked eye, for example from ice dams.

Another device that proves invaluable in disaster restoration work is the Nano Cartridge, an eco-friendly filter that eliminates strong odors fast. The cartridge was the key to the company’s success in remediating a fire at one of the properties managed by Sterling Services Inc. David J. Levy, president of Sterling Services, praises ServiceMaster by Gilmore for “playing a positive role...”
in making a tragedy a reference opportunity for my management firm.”

The fire occurred at around noon in the middle of a cold winter week, displacing 50 families. Within minutes of calling ServiceMaster by Gilmore, Levy was speaking with a project manager about a “battle plan” to return the families to their homes as quickly as possible.

Town officials told Sterling Services to set reasonable expectations for the residents — namely, that the 27 families affected would need to stay out of their homes for up to a week. Yet, “due to the flotilla of trucks and equipment, not to mention the speed, depth, and care of ServiceMaster’s experienced workers,” David says, the building inspector permitted residents of all units without structural damage to return home the very next evening, less than 36 hours after a nearly catastrophic fire loss.

“It’s nice to know that one aspect of the work — the physical response to a major insurance loss — can be resolved with one simple phone call,” says David. “On one level, they provided emergency response services. But on a more important level, they provided peace of mind.”

Bio-Recovery Division

Peace of mind is all part of the service provided by ServiceMaster by Gilmore. “Our goal is to provide everyone, from the insurance provider to the property manager to the unit owner, the peace of mind that comes from knowing that, when they call ServiceMaster by Gilmore, we will get their building back to pre-loss condition,” says Maria Benway, a ServiceMaster by Gilmore marketing representative.

It’s also a key component of ServiceMaster by Gilmore’s Bio-Recovery Division, whose mission is the clean up and restoration of trauma and crime scenes.

Because of the hazards inherent in this kind of clean up, special protocols have to be observed, such as wearing personal protective equipment that safeguards workers from blood-borne pathogens and discarding affected material from the area as medical waste. It also is a very methodical specialty, more detailed even than other types of disaster clean up.

“Not a tremendous number of companies do this kind of work,” shares Bob Gilmore, who heads up the division together with Edward Herrera. “We’re thrilled that we can offer this service.”

Because of the safety and emotional issues involved, special crews were hand-picked and given extra training in bio-hazard remediation. These crews are often confronted by unique situations. For example, in a home where there has been hoarding, refuse has to be disposed of methodically, because crews don’t know what they’ll find under each layer.

While family members can and sometimes do attempt to handle this kind of clean up themselves, Bob Gilmore recommends against it. “It’s better to have the professionals do it,” he says. He adds that property managers are grateful to have a resource in these kinds of stressful situations.

A Core Value of Caring

No matter what the job is, the company’s most important task, according to Steven, is to reassure the customer and provide the ultimate in service. At ServiceMaster by Gilmore the old saying that “the customer is always right” is taken very seriously. “I tell our workers to pretend they’re work-

instantly got to work and did everything they said they would. They were extremely impressive.”

For property managers especially, that availability is key. “Property managers have a tremendous amount of responsibility,” Sarah points out. “We’re here to make their load lighter for them. So if there’s ever an emergency, even if it’s Christmas Day, they can make one call and know it will be taken care of.”

“It is really a team effort,” agrees Benway. “The entire staff strives to make the customer happy. We just want everyone to know that, when they need us, we’re just a phone call away — even at 2 a.m.”

For more information about ServiceMaster by Gilmore, call (800) 783-0552 or visit www.svmgilmore.com.

ServiceMaster by Gilmore’s experienced field staff is poised to respond to emergencies around the clock.

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