According to the [Anxiety and Depression Association of America](http://www.adaa.org/living-with-anxiety/ask-and-learn/ask-expert/what-hoarding-and-how-do-i-know-if-i%E2%80%99m-hoarder-what-dif), “Hoarding is the compulsive purchasing, acquiring, searching, and saving of items that have little or no value. The behavior usually has deleterious effects – emotional, physical, social, financial, and even legal – for a hoarder and family members.”

5 Hoarding Levels

The National Study Group on Compulsive Disorganization created a [Clutter Hoarding Scale](http://www.post-gazette.com/local/north/2010/12/02/Levels-of-hoarding-some-guidelines-for-recognizing-the-problem/stories/201012020349) as a guideline for professional organizers making their first few contacts with clients:

1. **Hoarding Level One:** Clutter is not excessive, all doors and stairways are accessible, there are no odors, and the home is considered safe and sanitary.
2. **Hoarding Level Two:** Clutter inhabits 2 or more rooms, light odors, overflowing garbage cans, light mildew in kitchens and bathrooms, one exit is blocked, some pet dander or pet waste puddles, and limited evidence of housekeeping.
3. **Hoarding Level Three:** One bedroom or bathroom is unusable, Excessive dust, heavily soiled food preparation areas, strong odors throughout the home, excessive amount of pets, and visible clutter outdoors.
4. **Hoarding Level Four:** Sewer backup, hazardous electrical wiring, flea infestation, rotting food on counters, lice on bedding, and pet damage to home.
5. **Hoarding Level Five:** Rodent infestation, kitchen and bathroom unusable due to clutter, human and animal feces, and disconnected electrical and/or water service.

Hoarding disorder affects people of all ages and demographics. However, hoarding is [more prevalent](http://hoarding.iocdf.org/types.aspx) in older age groups, and the symptoms seem to increase with age. Hoarding can severely disrupt the daily life of the person ailing from the disorder and cause them to become reclusive. When an older person who suffers from hoarding disorder is isolated from friends and family, [unattended death](http://le.utah.gov/code/TITLE26/htm/26_04_000200.htm) risk is greatly increased because there is no one there to find the person immediately after he or she has passed away.

Because of the potential health hazards associated with an unattended death, as well as the disturbing nature of decomposition, cleaning up a hoarding site where an unattended death has occurred should be left to a professional bioremediation company like Aftermath. At Aftermath, we understand that cleaning up after an unattended death is one of the most challenging situations a family can face. We provide unattended death and hoarding cleanup services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Speak to an [Aftermath representative](http://www.aftermath.com/contact-24-7-365/) today for more information.