

GUIDE TO FIRE RECOVERY



Date_____

Incident Number_____

Shift Commander_____

(815)482-7640

There when you need us, protecting and caring for you and your loved ones as our own.

Fire Restoration – The First 24 Hours

The first 24 hours following a fire is a critical time. After making sure your immediate needs are met, the focus should be ensuring that your property is secure and further damage is prevented. The following is a checklist to consider and may be completed by a professional company. Always consult with your insurance representative and a credible restoration professional.

- APPLIANCES.....**Empty refrigerators and freezers completely if electricity is off and prop their doors open with a rolled towel. Do not operate wet appliances until they have a service technician check them.

- CARPETS.....**If possible, brush or vacuum loose smoke particles from carpets. Avoid walking or tracking on carpets. Do not use “do-it-yourself” home carpet cleaners. Cleaning should be done only under the direction of a certified restoration specialist.

- CEILINGS/WALLS..**You can wash walls and ceilings while still wet, using a detergent and warm water. For heavy smoke damage, mix 4 to 6 tablespoons of tri-sodium phosphate and one gallon of warm water. Tri-sodium phosphate can be purchased at the local paint and hardware store.

- CLOTHING.....**Smoke odor and soot can sometimes be washed from clothing. If you have any question about cleaning or preparation of clothing, contact a cleaning service.

- DOORS.....**Close doors in affected areas to localize smoke odors as much as possible.

- FOOD & MEDICATION...**For safety reasons do not consume food or medication exposed to excessive heat and smoke. If you are in doubt, throw it out!

- ELECTRONICS.....**Do not utilize any computer, TV, stereo or electronic appliance until it has been cleaned and checked by an electronic repair company or fire restoration specialist

- FURNANCE**.....Change the furnace filter if the blower is operating. Use masking tape to secure double layers of cheesecloth over air registers. Contact an HVAC contractor if furnace was exposed to heat and smoke

- FURNITURE**.....If possible, avoid using upholstered furniture until it has been cleaned

- PETS**.....Move all pets to a clean environment. Have them checked by a veterinarian as soon as possible if they were exposed to smoke.

- PLANTS**.....Wash plants with mild soap and water, cleaning both sides of the leaves (water softener helps.)

- PLUMBING**.....Call a plumber to drain and winterize the system if the heat will be turned off in the winter.

- WINDOWS**.....If possible, open windows to ventilate.

Fire Restoration – Immediate Call-to-Action

- Do contact your insurance company or insurance agent immediately to file a claim. They will walk you through the process of finding temporary living quarters and meeting other immediate needs.
- Do not enter a property that has sustained heavy fire damage unless it has been inspected and deemed safe to re-enter by WFRD. If you have a pre-existing medical condition, it may be aggravated by charred conditions or smoke odor inside.
- Do wait for the fire department to release the scene before entering your home/business.
- Do not disturb the origin of the fire.
- Do make arrangements to protect your property from further damage or theft. This should include boarding up broken windows or doors, providing temporary power and drying down the building to prevent additional water damage.
- Do take with any valuables such as jewelry, cash, and credit cards if your home is uninhabitable. You may also want to consider retrieving important documents such as wills, passports and birth certificates.
- Do not throw away anything damaged by the fire. If you do not have documentation of your loss you may not be compensated for it.
- Do keep all receipts for additional living expenses related to your fire, which may include hotel receipts, food purchases, etc.

Safeguard Your Personal Documents

Disasters happen when we least expect. It is important to safeguard financial, legal and personal information by storing originals or copies of important documents in a safe deposit box in a financial institution or a home fireproof safe. The following is a list of documents to consider:

- INSURANCE POLICIES
- IRREPLACEABLE PHOTOS, VIDEOS, ETC.
- VEHICLE REGISTRATIONS
- VEHICLE INSURANCE RECORDS
- BIRTH CERTIFICATES
- PASSPORTS
- SOCIAL SECURITY CARDS
- CHILDREN'S SCHOOL RECORDS AND KEEPSAKES
- MEDICAL AND DENTAL RECORDS
- INSURANCE IDENTIFICATION CARDS
- MEMBERSHIP CARDS/RECORDS
- COIN, STAMP OR OTHER COLLECTIONS
- LIST OR PHOTOS OF YOUR HOME INVENTORY
- PLANE TICKETS AND TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Frequently Asked Questions

WHY WERE WINDOWS BROKEN AND/OR HOLES CUT IN THE ROOF?

Breaking windows and cutting holes in the roof allow for the process of “ventilation” to begin. As a fire burns, heat, smoke and flames move upward and outward. Breaking windows and opening roofs stops the damaging outward movement by allowing the heat and smoke to leave the building. This enables the firefighters to fight the fire more safely and efficiently, which, ultimately, results in less damage to the structure.

WHY ARE THERE HOLES CUT IN MY WALLS?

Fires can burn in areas where they can't be easily seen. Many times the studs inside the walls can be burning with little evidence of fire on the outside of the walls. We must open the walls far enough to not only extinguish the fire, but also, to ensure that there is no fire hidden behind the wall board.

MAY I GET A COPY OF THE FIRE REPORT?

Yes, a copy of the fire report can be obtained 48 hours after the incident. To obtain a copy, call (815) 338-2621 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday and a copy will be available at Fire Station 1, 435 E. Judd Street.

ARE THE UTILITIES TO MY HOUSE STILL CONNECTED AND SAFE TO USE?

Before the Woodstock Fire/Rescue District (WFRD) leave the scene, we will have determined that the utilities are either safe to use or are disconnected.

DO NOT ATTEMPT TO RECONNECT ANY OF THE UTILITIES THAT HAVE BEEN DISCONNECTED BY THE UTILITY COMPANIES.

Repairs to gas, water and electrical lines on the customer's side of the meter are not done by the utility companies and therefore must be done by private contractors. If there is significant damage to your home/facility, a building inspector from the City/County will be notified. If your facility is in some type

of food business for the general public and has a fire, notification will be made to the County Health Department.

Gas meter and appliances should always be turned back on by the gas company. A licensed electrician must complete electrical work and the power company will make the meter hook-up.

WILL THE FIRE DISTRICT SECURE THE BUILDING BEFORE THEY LEAVE?

The Woodstock Fire/Rescue District will remove as much water and debris as possible before turning the building back to the owner. It is the owners responsibility to see that the property is secure once WFRD leaves the scene. Names of board-up services can be provided at your request. The cost is normally covered by insurance. In the owner's absence, WFRD may have a board-up service secure the building.

WILL THIS BE IN THE NEWSPAPER/RADIO/TV?

The WFRD is a public agency and its records are open to the public. A press release will be issued by WFRD to the local media. We will attempt to control the media on the scene. The media personnel are very sympathetic to a personal loss and will treat you in a respective way.

WHAT ABOUT INJURIES FROM THE FIRE?

An ambulance will respond and treat any injuries that occur. If treatment by a doctor is needed, the patient will be taken to the hospital. Some homeowner's policies provide limited medical coverage. Contact with the employer should be made if you have a company health insurance policy.

DIRECTORY

In case of emergency dial 911

American Red Cross	(815)455-9780
Animal Control	(815)459-6222
Building Inspector-Woodstock	(815)338-4305
McHenry County	(815)334-4560
Lakewood	(815)459-4671
Commonwealth Edison	(800)334-7661
County Clerk's Office-Birth/Death Certificates	(815) 334-4110
Damaged Currency-US Treasury	(866)575-2361
Department of Motor Vehicle	(312)793-1010
Department of Human Services	(815) 338-0234
Dorr Township Assessor	(815)338-0128
Family Counseling	(847) 854-2700
Fire Report	(815)338-2621
Greenwood Township Assessor	(815)648-4536
Hartland Township Assessor	(815) 338-5526
Health Department	(815)334-4510
Housing Authority	(815)338-7752
Northern Illinois Gas	(888)642-6748
Poison Control	(800)222-1222
Salvation Army	(815)455-2769
Sheriff's Department	(815)338-2144
Seneca Township Assessor	(815) 923-5922
Social Security Office	(800)772-1213
Woodstock Police	(815)338-2131

