

ELYRIA FIRE FIGHTERS, LOCAL ELYRIA, OHIO 03



AFTER THE FIRE'S OUT – WHAT TO DO

We have put out your fire, but that's only part of the job. We've made sure that the fire is completely out, and we've done some basic clean-up work. It's now up to you to repair fire damage and replace damaged items. We hope that the following tips will help. This information is based on tried-and-true methods pioneered by organizations like the Red Cross.

First, we should answer some questions you might have about our operations:

1. Why the broken windows? Or holes in the roof? As a fire burns, it moves upward, then outward. Removing windows and cutting holes in the roof – “ventilation” in firefighting language – stops that damaging outward movement, and enables us to fight the fire more efficiently, resulting in less damage in the long run.

2. Why the holes in the walls? We have to be sure – absolutely sure – that all the fire was out, and that there was no “hidden” fire inside walls and partitions.

If you have other questions about our operations or your fire, please do not hesitate to call the Elyria Fire Department, Fire Prevention Bureau, for more information.

Clothing

Smoke odor and soot can often be washed from your clothing. The following formula will often work for clothing that can be bleached:

- 4-6 tbsp. tri-sodium phosphate
- 1 cup Lysol or any household chlorine bleach
- 1 gallon water

Mix well, add clothes, rinse with clear Water. Dry well.

(Note – 2 tbsp. sodium hypochlorite can be substituted for tri-sodium phosphate.)

To remove mildew, wash the fresh stain with soap and water. Then rinse and dry in sun. If the stain isn't gone, use lemon juice and salt; 1 tbsp. perborate bleach to 1 pt. lukewarm water; or diluted solution of household chlorine bleach.

Test colored garments before using any treatment!

If you're taking woolen, silk or rayon Garments to the cleaners, first remove

Trimnings, shoulder pads, etc. Then, if the garment is damp or wet, dry it in a well-ventilated area. Shake and brush well, and take the garment to the cleaners as soon as possible.

Cooking Utensils

Your pots, pans, flatware, etc., should be washed with soapy water, rinsed, and then polished with a fine-powdered cleaner. You can polish copper and brass with special polish, salt sprinkled on a piece of lemon or salt sprinkled on a cloth saturated with vinegar.

Documents and Records

Here's a check list of documents you will need to replace if they've been destroyed:

- Birth certificates
- Driver's licenses
- Bank books
- Insurance policies
- Military discharge papers
- Passports
- Social Security cards
- Marriage and divorce papers
- Credit cards
- Title to deeds
- Stocks and bonds
- Wills
- Medical records
- Payment books
- Warranties
- Income tax records
- Auto registration title cards
- Citizenship papers
- Prepaid burial contracts
- Animal registration papers
- Children Services and Welfare clients should notify their case workers if their ID cards for check cashing, their medical aid or food stamp cards have been destroyed.

Copies of birth, death and marriage records can be obtained from the Clerk of District Court in the county of birth, death or marriage. For passport replacement information, call the U.S. Post Office at 322-4859. For Social Security card information, call 800/362-2170. For driver's license information, call Auto License Bureau.

Electrical Appliances

Don't run wet appliances until you've had a serviceman check them. This is especially true of electrical appliances. If the Fire Department, Columbia Gas, or Ohio Edison turned off your gas or power during the fire, call the proper utility company to restore these services – don't try to do it yourself. The numbers are listed in the phonebook.

Food

Wash your canned goods in detergent and water. Do the same for food in jars. If labels come off, be sure you mark the contents on the can or jar with a grease

pencil. **Don't use canned goods when cans have bulged or are dented or rusted!**

If your home freezer has stopped running, you can still save the frozen food:

1. **Keep the freezer closed!** Your freezer has enough insulation to keep food frozen for at least one day – perhaps as many as two or three days.

2. **Move your food** to a neighbor's freezer or locker plant – wrap the frozen food in newspapers and blankets, or use insulated boxes.

If your food has thawed, observe the following precautions:

1. Fruits can be re-frozen if they still taste and smell good. Otherwise, if the fruits are not spoiled, they can be eaten at once.

2. **Do not re-freeze vegetables if they have thawed completely!** Re-freeze only if there are ice crystals in the vegetables. If your vegetables have thawed and cannot be used soon, throw them out. If you have any doubt over whether your vegetables are spoiling, throw them out – don't wait for bad odor.

To remove odor from your refrigerator or freezer, wash the inside with a solution of baking soda and water, or use one cup of vinegar or household ammonia to one gallon of water. Some baking soda in an open container, or a piece of charcoal can be placed in the refrigerator or freezer to absorb odor.

What to do

Flooring and Rugs

When water gets underneath linoleum, it can cause odors and warp the wood floor. So if water has gotten underneath, remove your linoleum – call your linoleum or flooring dealer for suggestions for a solvent to loosen the linoleum cement without damaging the linoleum. After you've removed your linoleum, **let the floor dry thoroughly before replacing it.**

Rugs and carpets should also be allowed to dry thoroughly. Throw rugs can then be cleaned by beating, sweeping or vacuuming, and then shampooing. Rugs should be dried as quickly as possible – lay them flat, and expose them to a circulation of warm, dry air. A fan turned on the rugs will speed drying. Make sure the rugs are thoroughly dry – even though the surface seems dry, any moisture remaining at the base of the tufts can quickly rot a rug. For information on cleaning and preserving carpets, call your carpet dealer or installer.

Insurance

The first thing to do after a fire is to protect yourself from additional losses. If you have to stay elsewhere, remove valuables. If the Fire Department is investigating the fire, an officer will accompany you through the house when you remove valuables, and inventory the property you take with you.

Your Fire Department will do its utmost to secure your property after a fire. We will remove as much water and debris as possible, and protect lightly-damaged property, or undamaged property. We will also cover broken windows and ventilation openings in your roof with plastic, or try to arrange for a contractor to do it. If you are out of town at the time of the fire, we will see that your home is protected from further damage as much as possible.

In any event, call your insurance agent or carrier as soon as possible. Your insurance company will see that windows, doors, ventilation openings and other openings are boarded up. If you rent your property, the owner should see that such jobs are done.

Your insurance agent can also help you get your utilities restored at the earliest possible time.

If you have a fire adjuster, contact him as well, as soon as possible.

If your property is not insured, or if your insurance will not cover all your losses, contact your family lawyer or the Internal Revenue Service 800/362-9050 for information on tax deduction status.

Leather and Books

Wipe your leather goods with a damp cloth, then with a dry cloth. Stuff your purses and shoes with newspapers to retain shape. Leave your suitcases open. Leather goods should be dried away from heat and sun. When leather goods are dry, clean with

saddle soap. You can use steel wool or a suede brush on suede. Rinse leather and suede jackets in cold water and dry away from heat and sun.

Books can be dried by placing them on end, with the pages separated. Then they should be piled and pressed to prevent the pages from crinkling. Alternating drying and pressing will help prevent mildew until the books are thoroughly dry. A fan turned on the books will help them dry. If your books are very damp, sprinkle cornstarch or talc between the pages, leave for several hours, and then brush off.

Locks and Hinges

Locks (especially iron locks) should be taken apart, wiped with kerosene and oiled. If locks cannot be removed, squirt machine oil through a bolt opening or keyhole, and work the knob to distribute the oil. Hinges should also be thoroughly cleaned and oiled.

Mattresses

Reconditioning an innerspring mattress at home is very difficult, if not impossible. Your mattress can probably be renovated by a company that builds or repairs mattresses. If you must use your mattress temporarily, put it out into the sun to dry. Then cover it with rubber or plastic sheeting.

It's almost impossible to get smoke odor out of pillows – the feathers and foam retain the odor.

Money Replacement

If money you've kept in your home is only half-burned or less (if 1/2 or more of the bill is intact), you can take the remainder to the Federal Reserve Bank, East 6th Street and Superior Avenue in Cleveland. Or you can mail the burned or torn money via **FIRST CLASS REGISTERED MAIL** to:

U.S. Treasury Dept.
Main Treasury Building, Room 1123
Washington, D.C. 20220

Mutilated or melted coins can be taken to the Federal Reserve Bank, or mailed via **FIRST CLASS REGISTERED MAIL** to:

Superintendent, U.S. Assay Office
32 Old Slip
New York, NY 10005

If your U.S. Savings Bonds have been mutilated or destroyed, write to:

U. S. Treasury Dept.
Bureau of Public Debt
Division of Loans and Currency
537 S. Clark Street
Chicago, IL 60605
Attn.: Bond Consultant

Include name(s) and address(es) on bonds, approximate date or time period when purchased, denominations and approximate number of each.

Soot and Smoke Odor

To remove soot and smoke odor from walls, furniture and floors, do the following: Mix together:

4-6 tbsp. tri-sodium phosphate
1 cup Lysol or any chlorine bleach
1 gallon water
or
2 tbsp. sodium hypochlorite
1 gallon water

Wear rubber gloves when cleaning. After washing article, rinse with clear water and dry thoroughly. Tri-sodium phosphate or sodium hypochlorite can be obtained at a hardware store.

Walls

Walls may be washed down while wet. Use a mild soap or detergent. Wash a small area at one time, working from the floor up. Then rinse the wall with clear water immediately. Ceilings should be washed last. **DO NOT REPAINT UNTIL WALLS/CEILING ARE COMPLETELY DRY!**

Your wallpaper can also be repaired. Use a commercial paste to repaste loose edges or sections. Contact your wallpaper dealer or installer for information on wallpaper cleaners. Washable wallpaper can be washed like an ordinary wall, but care must be taken not to soak the paper. Work from bottom to top to prevent streaking.

Wood

Wood furniture or fixtures can be treated in the following way:

1. Clear off mud or dirt.
2. Remove drawers. Let them dry thoroughly so there'll be no sticking when you replace them.
3. Scrub with stiff brush and a cleaning solution.
4. Wet wood can decay and mold, so **dry thoroughly**. Open doors and windows for good ventilation. Turn on your furnace or air conditioner, if necessary.
5. If mold forms, wipe the wood with a cloth soaked in mixture of water and kerosene or borax dissolved in hot water.
6. **Do not dry your furniture in the sun.** The wood will warp and twist out of shape.
7. To remove white spots or film, rub the wood surface with a cloth soaked in a 1/2 cup household ammonia 1/2 cup water solution. Then wipe dry and polish with wax, or rub the surface with a cloth soaked in a 1/2 cup turpentine 1/2 cup linseed oil solution.

Be careful – these materials are flammable!

You can also rub the wood surface with a 4/0 steel wool pad dipped in liquid polishing wax, wipe with a soft cloth and then buff.

This public service message paid for by members of the Elyria Fire Department.