

AFTER THE FIRE

the next steps



REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
OF **WOOD BUFFALO**



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AFTER THE FIRE

The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo Fire Prevention Branch is dedicated to providing assistance to those impacted by fire. As part of our commitment to the residents in our region, the following information is intended as a guide for victims of fire, and may not necessarily relate to your specific needs.

Recovering from a fire can be a challenging process for those impacted. Often, the hardest part is knowing the initial steps to take, and who to contact throughout the early recovery period. This guide was designed to assist you in dealing with some of the common issues associated with confusion and lack of information, immediately after a fire.

Please take the time to carefully read the information provided. If you still have questions, contact the fire Prevention Branch at 780.792.5519.



- *Regional Emergency Services, Fire Prevention*

FIRE INVESTIGATION

Under the Safety Codes Act of Alberta, every fire must be investigated to determine its origin, cause and circumstances. Regional Emergency Services has full-time Fire Investigators providing their services. When a fire is under investigation, no one is permitted on the site without express approval of the Fire Investigator. After Regional Emergency Services has completed its investigation, the scene will be released to the owner.



Memorandum of Fire and Subscription Agreement

This Memorandum of Insurance
policy within the next 60 days
Estimated Reconstruction Cost
of the Estimate, or you may
the amount of your insurance
on this document

IF YOU ARE INSURED

Contact your insurance company as soon as possible after the fire. If you are renting or leasing property, contact the owner as well. Major insurance companies have 24-hour hotlines, and will generally treat your problem promptly.

Ask the insurance company what to do about the immediate needs of the dwelling, such as covering windows, doors, other exposed areas and pumping out any water.

Also ask your insurance company what actions are required of you. Some policy holders may be required to make an inventory of damaged personal property, showing in detail the quantity, description and cost for these items.

THE FOLLOWING IS A LIST OF QUESTIONS YOU MAY WANT TO ASK YOUR INSURANCE ADJUSTER:

- When will you be on site?
- For emergency lodging, do we pay and keep receipts, or does insurance pay up front?
- What do I do if I have no access to immediate cash or credit cards?
- What happens to my pets? Do I have to take them with me or can they be placed in a kennel?
- Can I take anything with me now?
- What about my valuables?
- Once on site, who is the restoration contractor to facilitate repairs?
- When will the contractor be on site?
- Who will secure the site?
- Who is allowed to have access to the site?
- Do I have access?
- How long do you estimate the repairs will take?
- When do you think I can move back in?
- What is available for additional living expenses?

IMPORTANT DOCUMENT REPLACEMENT CHECKLIST

DRIVER'S LICENSE	www.servicealberta.gov.ab.ca
BIRTH, DEATH, AND MARRIAGE CERTIFICATES	www.servicealberta.gov.ab.ca
DIVORCE CERTIFICATE	www.programs.alberta.ca
BANK DOCUMENTS / CREDIT CARDS	Bank / Credit card supplier
CANADIAN PASSPORT	www.servicecanada.gc.ca
INSURANCE POLICIES	Insurance company
CANADA SAVINGS BONDS	www.bankofcanada.ca / 1.800.303.1285
SOCIAL INSURANCE CARD	Service Canada - www.servicecanada.gc.ca

WHO TO NOTIFY IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE

- If you are renting, call the building supervisor, manager, landlord or building owner;
- Your child's school or daycare, especially if the child will be absent from school;
- Employers or employees who may be expecting you at work;
- Banks, credit unions or mortgage brokers who hold your mortgage;
- If any structural damage has been caused, permits may be required to rebuild. Contact Planning and Development and a building inspector for this;
- If you have to move out for any length of time, contact Canada Post to reroute your mail

UTILITIES

Often utility services will be shut off as a safety precaution, and to prevent further damage to the structure. The procedures to re-establishing utility services are as follows:

Electricity: An electrical inspector must check the wiring to be sure it is safe before power is restored. Contact Superior Safety Codes or Atco Electric.

Water will be restored by the Municipal Underground Services Department. Before water is restored ensure the fire hasn't damaged the plumbing which may cause water damage when the pipes are filled again. For inquiries on restoring water, contact the Municipal Underground Services Department.

GAS: A gas inspector must check the piping and related appliances to be sure it is safe to restore the gas. Contact Superior Safety Codes or Atco Gas

SUPERIOR SAFETY CODES: 780.715.7726

ATCO ELECTRIC: 1.800.668.5506

MUNICIPAL UNDERGROUND SERVICES DEPARTMENT: 780.799.5823

ATCO GAS 780.310.5678



RETURNING HOME

If returning home shortly after the fire, a rekindle or second fire from a hot spot is possible. During this time, it's important to be especially aware, and should you see smoke or flames, leave your home immediately, and call 911.

If your home has experienced significant fire or smoke damage, it is recommended to have the smoke alarms replaced, to ensure they are operational and in good working order. Smoke alarms should be installed on each level of the home, in close proximity to sleeping quarters.

The structure may have been weakened by the fire, and until a Building Inspector can perform a structural survey, it is advisable to keep all unnecessary people away from the building.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT: 780.799.8695

FIRE PREVENTION BRANCH: 780.792.5519



RETURNING HOME

INFORMATION ON FIRE DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS

WHY ARE THERE BROKEN WINDOWS, DOORS AND HOLES IN MY ROOF?

A fire produces temperatures well above 650 °C, along with smoke and hot gases. At times, it is necessary to eliminate heat, smoke and hot gas by ventilation before firefighters can enter to extinguish the fire. Ventilation must be done quickly to help reduce fire spread. Often, firefighters must forcibly open walls and ceilings to find any hidden fires or hot spots, allowing for complete fire extinguishment. After the fire is out, this type of damage may appear unnecessary.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO OBTAIN A COPY OF THE FIRE REPORT?

Normally, a fire report is given to the insurance company. To obtain a copy of the fire report, have your insurance company contact the Fire Prevention Branch.



RETURNING HOME

CLEANING TIPS

FOOD MANAGEMENT - IF IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT

Partial thawing and refreezing food will reduce its quality, particularly in fruits, vegetables and prepared foods. It's safe to refreeze foods that have partially thawed if the food still contains visible ice crystals. Meat is unsafe to eat when it begins to spoil. If the colour or odour of the thawed product is questionable, throw it out.

Wash your canned goods in detergent and water. Do the same for food in jars. Do not use canned goods when the cans have bulged or rusted. Do not refreeze frozen foods that have thawed.

To remove odour 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 four litres of water. Baking soda in an open container, or a piece of charcoal can also be placed in the refrigerator or freezer to absorb odor.

COOKING UTENSILS

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

ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES

Don't use appliances that have been exposed to water or steam until you have a service representative check them. This is especially true of electrical appliances. In addition, steam can remove the lubricant from some moving parts.



RETURNING HOME

CLEANING TIPS

RUGS AND CARPETS

Rugs and carpets should be allowed to dry thoroughly. Throw rugs can 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 warm, circulated, dry air. A fan turned on the rugs will speed drying. Make sure the rugs have dried thoroughly. For information on cleaning and preserving carpets, call a carpet dealer, or a qualified carpet cleaning professional.

LEATHER AND BOOKS

- Wipe leather with a damp cloth, followed by a dry cloth.
- Stuff purses and shoes with newspaper to retain their shape.
- Leave suitcases open.
- Leather goods should be dried away from heat and sun.
- When leather goods are dry, clean them with saddle soap.
- Rinse leather and suede jackets in cold water and dry away from heat and sun.
- Books can be dried by placing them with the pages separated. If books are very damp, sprinkle corn starch or talc between the pages, and leave for several hours, then brush off.

CLOTHING

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

- 4-6 teaspoons of tri-sodium phosphate (available at paint stores)
- 1 cup household chlorine bleach

Be sure to test coloured garments before using any treatment. Take wool, silk or rayon garments to the dry-cleaners as soon as possible.

RETURNING HOME

CLEANING TIPS

LOCKS AND HINGES

- Locks should be taken apart and wiped with oil. 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.

WALLS, FLOORS AND FURNITURE

To remove soot and smoke from walls, floors and furniture it's best to use a mild soap or detergent, or mix together the following solution:

- 4-6 tbsp tri-sodium phosphate (can be purchased in paint stores);
- 1 cup household cleaner or chlorine bleach;
- 4 litres warm water

Wear rubber gloves when cleaning with this solution. Be sure to rinse your walls with clean water immediately. Ceilings should be washed last, and ceilings should not be repainted until they are completely dry.

Wallpaper can also be repaired. Use a commercial paste to re-paste a loose edge or section. Washable wallpaper can be cleaned like any ordinary wall, but take care not to soak the paper. Work from the bottom to the top, to prevent streaking.

FURNITURE

Do not use chemicals on furniture. Inexpensive cleaners such as flax soap or linseed soft soap (available in hardware and paint stores) are the most efficient products to use on wood, including kitchen cabinets. Do not dry furniture in the sun because the wood may warp and twist out of shape.

MATTRESSES

Reconditioning an inner-spring mattress at home is very difficult. Your mattress can likely be renovated by a company that builds or repairs mattresses. It is almost impossible to remove smoke odor from pillows, feathers and foam, as they retain odor.

SOCIAL SUPPORT SERVICES

VICTIM SERVICES



The Fort McMurray Victim Services Unit (FVSU) provides immediate, short term crisis intervention services to people affected by fire. FVSU provides referrals and assistance in contacting community agencies to help with immediate needs, such as housing, clothing and food. VSU also provides ongoing care and emotional support to residents impacted by fire or displaced from their homes.

Victim Services can be contacted 24 hours a day.
780.788.4250



SALVATION ARMY

Salvation Army offers a community and family services program that provides front-line services and support to families and individuals who are experiencing emergency situations. 780.743.4135

ALBERTA WORKS - EMERGENCY NEEDS ALLOWANCE

alberta **works**

Alberta Works income support provides a range of emergency benefits to Albertans who have an emergency that meets the following conditions:

- The situation occurred due to unforeseeable circumstances beyond your control and
- Your situation presents a severe health risk and,
- You cannot wait until the next benefit period or access other resources

www.employment.alberta.ca/albertaworks
Toll free: 1.866.644.5135



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www.woodbuffalo.ab.ca/fireprevention