

Prioritizing the First 24 Hours After A Fire

Anyone experiencing medical complications should receive care as soon as possible. Take them to the nearest hospital or emergency care facility indicated by any medical coverage provider you may have.

Do not enter the damaged site until it's been declared safe and you have received permission to do so.

Don't attempt to salvage food, beverages or medicine that's been exposed. Check with your doctor before taking any medication- severe heat can change the composition of medicine.

Securing the site may include arrangements to board up openings. Your insurance agent/company may be able to provide referrals for help.

Your local disaster relief services such as the American Red Cross or Salvation Army can help with a variety of services from temporary housing and food to assisting with eyeglasses, medicine, clothing and other necessary items.

Your local police department can provide extra patrol of the property. Provided them with a telephone number you can be contacted at.

Restoration services can be provided by companies that specialize in restoration of fire damaged structures- including securing the site against further damage. Check the yellow pages under construction or restoration companies. Make sure you know who will be responsible for the cost. Request cost estimates and check references before employing any company. (Some of the services they may also provide include: estimating for and repair of structural damage, packing, transporting and storage of property and repaired items, information on cleaning or repair subcontractors).

Utilities- water, electricity, and natural gas will normally be declared safe to use by the fire department before they leave the site or disconnected. Make sure the proper utility companies have been notified. (Never attempt to turn utilities back on by yourself).

Emergency housing may not always include a provision for pets. If a relative, neighbor or friend can't accommodate your pet, contact your local animal shelter or veterinarian for suggestions. Keep receipts on all items you may have to purchase. You may qualify for special casualty loss on your income taxes. Remember to keep a detailed inventory. Don't throw away damaged goods until it's completed and you have determined whether the property can be salvaged or is a loss.

Keep a list of any property you remove from the site

If you rent the property, call your landlord/property owner.

Call your insurance agent/company